俺の彼女と幼なじみが修羅場すぎる

3

裕時悠示

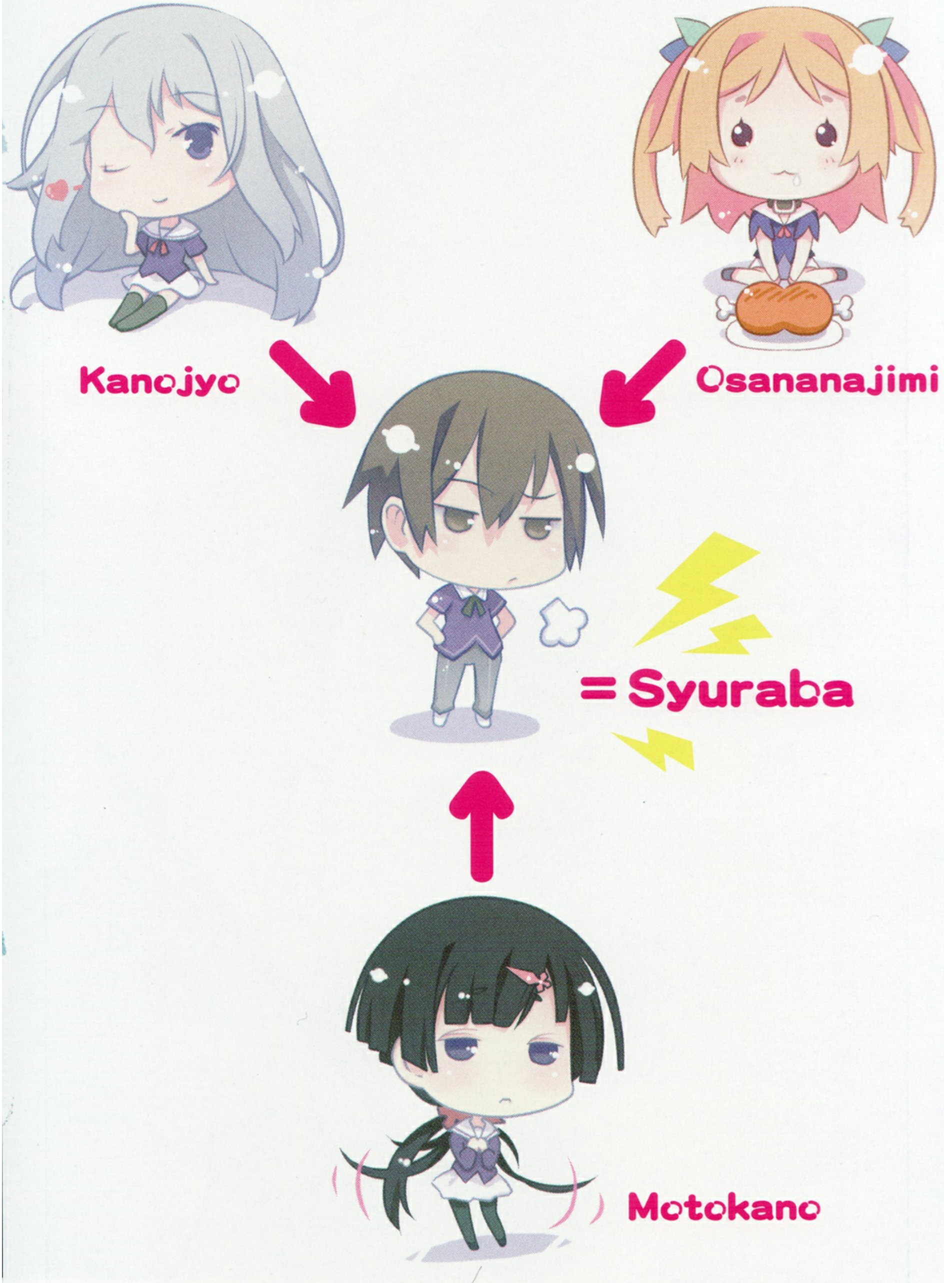
イラスト るろお

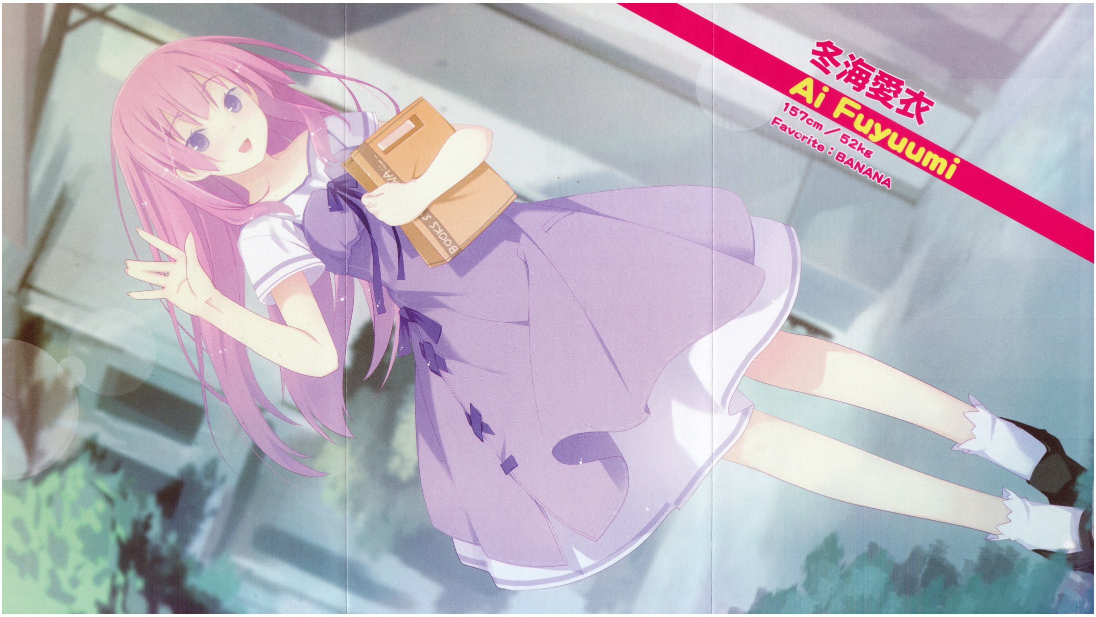
GA文庫

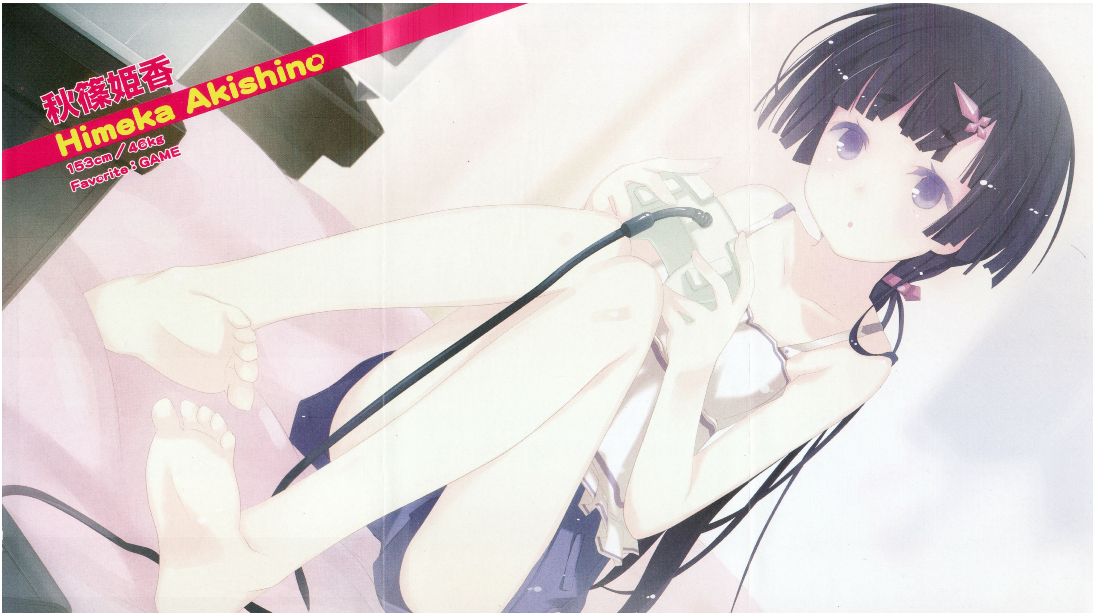
俺の彼女と幼なじみが修羅場すぎる

「モテまくりなんて、そんな破廉恥なこと
——この冬海愛衣が終わらせてあげる」
千和たち三人も呆気にとられる中、
風紀委員はマーカーを取り出した。
いわく、
『廃部決定！』

Ore no kanojyo to osananajimi ga syuraba sugiru


Kanojyo
Osananajimi
= Syuraba
Motokano


冬海愛衣
Ai Fuyuumi
157cm / 52kg
Favorite : BANANA
BOOKS


秋篠姫香
Himeka Akishino
153cm / 46kg
Favorite : GAME

#0: Mayhem on the Bed

I once saw this scene on a nine o'clock drama on a Monday night.

On a rainy night, and the lead character **guy A**'s ex-girlfriend showed up at his house.

Guy A allowed his soaked ex to come in and use his shower—— but it so happens that his current girlfriend comes over, and ends up encountering his ex-girlfriend.

Mayhem ensues.

At the time, I thought the protagonist was just stupid.

First, it's already strange that he lets his ex-girlfriend in.

They had already ended their relationship, so he shouldn't have been so reckless. **A** could have driven back or lent her money for a cab, and his ex-girlfriend would have gotten home fine.

Furthermore, it's bad not being able to explain himself properly to his girlfriend.

Since it was nothing but a misunderstanding, as long as he calmly and systematically explained himself, his girlfriend surely would have understood. But **A** panicked and was incoherent. Really, just how fearsome is that girlfriend? Pitiful.

Finally, the biggest problem is——— love itself is a mistake.

If you ask「Anti-Love」people like me, being sandwiched between one's girlfriend and ex-girlfriend is just a joke. It's called 'you reap what you sow'. To someone who isn't captivated by love, it's wouldn't be possible to get caught in such a mayhem.

It's just wouldn't be possible to get caught in such a mayhem.

Impossible.

Wouldn't...... be…….

"Eita-kun, open up the door! Please do so quickly."

"Ei-kun, open the door! Don't put up unnecessary resistance!"

They aggressively kept knocking on the door.

This was the infirmary of our Hanenoyama High School.

I— Kidou Eita —felt sick in class during the third period, so I was resting in bed.

There is no problem with that, however when I woke up I noticed my「ex-girlfriend」was sharing the bed with me.

"Hey, Hime."

"What is it, Eita?"

"Why are you lying here?"

When I asked, Hime puffed nose and said:

"This is because of karma determined in the distant past. As the reincarnated Holy Dragon Knight descended from heaven, liberating the shackles of fate, he drew his sword—"

"Don't be so denpa [1]around other people's ears—!"

Hime or rather Akishino Himeka is, truly beautiful girl. With silky black hair on a doll-like head, she had the cute traditional Japanese image, extremely delicate skin, and possessed the power to「cover up three flaws with a single virtue」. If only she acted like a normal person, she definitely would have been popular.

But—Hime was infected with「Chuunibyou」.[2]

In this girl's imagination, I was chosen in a previous life to fight the Evil Dragon Clan, as well as act as a soldier of Hime's love.

She was my girlfriend from my past life.

Or so we say「ex-girlfriend」.

Really, why doesn’t this girl just get admitted to a mental institution?

"Explain to me! What’s the meaning of this?"

"......It's my first time."

"That's not the explanation I want!"

At this rate I'm the one who is going to end up hospitalized!

"I want you to explain, why you’re lying next to me—!"

"Because of love. Is that not sufficient reason to do so?"

"Very insufficient!"

"Then hug me a little tighter."

Hime squeezed closer to me.

Her smooth white shoulders were exposed from under the sheets, as she leaned against my chest.

—Ah?

Smooth white shoulders?

"......Hey, Hime."

"What is it? Are you going to hurry and hug me now?"

Hime’s indecipherable face looked up at me.

At that moment, the sheets slipped a step further, revealing Hime’s slender chest with unexpectedly well-developed cleavage.

"Youuuuuuuuuuuuuu————————! Why are you naked?!"

"Because of love. Is that not sufficient reason to do so?"

"You actually think love can explain everything?!"

What an intimidating woman.

Although she’s had delusion denpa waves from the start, I get the feeling her actions are getting bolder and bolder.

"Eita-kun? For the well being of your body shouldn't you open the door while we are still smiling-?"

"Right, Ei-kun. If you don’t open up, you won’t know whether to laugh or cry."

Bang! A noise came from the other side of the white-colored door.

"......They seem to be knocking very hard."

"This is probably the work of some noisy poltergeist, a low-level spirit controlled by the wyvern."

Hime gently pulled my shirt sleeve.

"I think if you say, 「Hime-chan, I love you so much」 ten times, the poltergeist will leave…… come on, please recite it enthusiastically." [3]

"How can I do that enthusiastically?!"

"Then please do it indifferently—"

"That’s not the pointttttttttttt—! Co, cough coagh agh!" [4].

Because I was tsukkomi-ing [5]excessively, I started coughing. Hime gently stroked my back and said: "Is Eita okay?" Even if you say that, this is entirely your fault!

"Harusaki-san, shall we break down the door? Ahaha."

"Sounds good—even though it might get the teachers angry. But, it was all Ei-kun’s fault anyways, Uhuhu."

They continued to knock on the door, and with so much energy that I thought they would actually break down the door.

If the two of them saw the scene right now, they definitely wouldn’t stop even after dismembering me into eight pieces. [6]

I stared at the clock on the wall, and the time was half past twelve. Because the school day is shortened due to summer vacation, this time was already considered ‘after school’. In either case, a trace of the nurse couldn’t be found anywhere. If the teacher was somewhere eating lunch, I didn’t think she would be back any time soon.

"Eita, leave it to me."

Hime whispered, after seemingly sensing my anxiousness.

"I will cleverly trick them."

"R-really?"

"These lowly poltergeist, they are child’s play for my Holy Dragon Wisdom."

Hime smiled slightly, got off the bed and stood on the ground. She wrapped the sheets around her like a cloak, and shifted her pose. She probably thought she was dressing up as a demon lord or a vampire. It was pitiful, as she was going naked in a cloak and definitely crazy. Oh well, at least the sheets covered her entire body well.

—Hmn?

Naked in a cloak?

"Okay Eita, I’m going now."

"Wait a momenttttttttt———— at least put on some clothesss!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

From a certain death, I desperately stretched out my hand.

But regarding the sheets, it was quite close— yet I couldn't grab it!

Hime’s pattering footsteps approached the door, and she unlocked it.

At this rate the only option will be disaster. I sprung out of the bed, wrapped myself with the curtain and hid myself.

The door crashed opened, and two beasts rushed to get into the health center first.

"Okay Eita-kun, it's time for the dogeza!" [7]

The beast that just entered and asked for me to prostrate was Natsukawa Masuzu, who I tentatively consider my「girlfriend」. But really, she’s asking for the dogeza first thing after she gets in? Does this that after this there are higher levels of punishment?

"Ei-kun! Katsu Donl! Beef Steak! Hamburger!"

The other one was Harusaki Chiwa, my｢childhood friend｣who lived next door. The menu that she just shouted was her way of saying, ｢If you don’t make the food I like tonight, you won't be forgiven｣! In any event, can’t she just pick one of those, that greedy Chihuahua!

"......Strange? Himecchi is by herself?"

"Affirmative."

They looked at each other gloomily.

"Akishino-san, where is Eita-kun?"

"Unknown."

"I heard the teacher say he went to the infirmary to rest because he wasn’t feeling well in class."

"I also heard too. That’s why I came to see him, but I don’t see Eita."

Masuzu and Chiwa looked around the entire infirmary with their eyes.

In order to avoid being found, I tightened my shaking body hidden in the curtains. Even though the weather was nice, I was dripping with sweat and it soaked into the curtains. It made me afraid that the two of them would find me.

"—It seems like he’s really not here."

Masuzu muttered to herself. I was so relieved, I nearly collapsed to the ground on the spot.

"But I definitely did hear—Ei-kun and Himecchi’s voices."

"The sound of｢wind｣being noisy, that's probably at fault."

"Wind?"

"That wind in the corridor is brought along by bad things. You could say it was a challenge that came from the demon realm—"

Hime said expressionlessly with her usual poker face.

"Ah. It came from the demon realm? There is that and that."

"Somehow? Was I being over-suspicious?"

The desire of those two to investigate weakened. Hime’s chuunibyou was finally used for good! It was a really memorable moment.

"However, I still have this little feeling."

"What?"

"Ei-kun’s scent."

Chiwa said, her nose sniffing. Really, was this girl a dog?

"I think he was definitely here before. Did we miss him when he went home?"

"Akishino-san, what time did you come to the infirmary?"

"Five minutes after twelve."

"So you came right after home room ended?"

"So Ei-kun went straight home?"

"He left his bag and went straight home?"

I stole a peak from the gap in the curtains, and found that Masuzu was holding my bag against her chest.

Although I was very grateful that she specifically brought my bag...... that actually worsened the situation.

"Right, Akishino-san."

"What is it?"

"Why are you naked?"

Masuzu finally noticed it.

—You need to come up with a really good excuse, Hime!

Bearing my expectations, Hime slightly straightened her chest and replied:

"It was my first time."

—You said that earlierrrrr!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I nearly shouted that tsukkomi from my throat, but I restrained myself just in time. Damn, so dangerous. My blood is flowing with so much tsukkomi, it’s scary.

"When you say first time, what first time do you mean?"

Chiwa asked, bewildered.

Hime must also be thinking「Damn」; with her eyebrows twitching, she said:

"T-that was the first time I received a challenge letter from the Demon Realm."

Who could stand that receiving two or three of those?

"Why is Akishino-san sweating? The air conditioning is on."

"These are tears shed by my pained soul."

"......Hmuun?"

Masuzu leaned her face close, and stared at Hime’s face.

"Akishino-san."

"W-what is it?"

"The curtain over there has been shaking this entire time, hasn’t it?"

I almost cried out, but I restrained my self just in time.

This damned Masuzu, she is really sharp-eyed!

Chiwa tilted her head slightly and said:

"Could it be the wind from the air conditioner blowing?"

"From this position, that shouldn’t be a possibility."

"But is the window closed?"

"If we open the curtain, we’ll know."

My hands were full of sweat, and I grabbed my chest.

Masuzu approached me step by step.

—Hime, hurry up and think of something!

I looked at my only hope—my ex-girlfriend…… but she was lying in bed wrapped in sheets and staring at the ceiling with wide eyes.

She seemed to be painfully and incessantly twitching when she said:

"No. We need to restrain the「Shadow」. We cannot let it transform here a second time……. no……. could it be using that forbidden technique? No good, calm down quickly, my right hand……!"

She, in the world of her delusions, suddenly began to struggle violently.

—Hime youuuuuuuuuuu!!!!!! I'll remember thiiiiissssss!!!!!!!!!

I swallowed the tsukkomi that nearly came flying out of my throat, as I saw Masuzu’s white fingers reaching towards me.

"Fufufufufu, so what is actually hiding right here?"

Noooo! Stoppp, Masuzu-san!!!! Noooo mayhem! Please don’t open the curtainssss!! Wahhhhh!!!!!!!!

"What are you doing here?!"

The infirmary resounded with a clear and bright sound.

Masuzu’s approaching hand stopped right in front of me.

I gingerly peeked through the slit in the curtains towards the direction of the sound, and saw the female student wearing the armband of the disciplinary committee.

At first impression, I felt her appearance was definitely what would be considered「cute」or「pretty」. It was a different kind of cute than Chiwa’s puppy-ness, but rather she had a kind of tsun beauty like a Siamese cat [8]. Although she didn’t match up to Masuzu’s formal appearance, and was different from Hime’s natural beauty, her facial expression was quite stern. Even during the five seconds I was staring at her, her facial expression had already changed three times. In my aunt Saeko-san’s opinion (occupation: gal-game producer), she would definitely classify her as the「high spirited type tsundere bishoujo」! But no, it doesn't matter how I look, I can't see that dere part about her.

Her name is Fuyuumi Ai.

Her identity is someone who would approach any figure she sees, straighten up their clothing, inspect them for violations of school rules, and make small crying children terrified of the devil from the disciplinary committee.

"Really, do you all have no「common sense」? You even turned the infirmary into a place to play. "

"I-It's not like we are playing!"

Fuyuumi faced the denying Chiwa and severely pointed her finger:

"Your excuses have been more than enough, you Self-Performance Club!" [9]

"Self Performance?"

"「Self-Recreation」can be abbreviated to say「Self-Performance」right? "

I almost cried out「Oooh」.

Someone finally discovered original secret abbreviation for our club that only Masuzu and I knew.

"Horrible! What a thing to say?!"

"I spent so much effort to come up with the name,「Society for the Self-Recreation of the Maiden」. To be abbreviated like that-"

Masuzu was raging in anger next to Chiwa, displaying a drama of fake tears. Incidentally, she was the one who originally said,「The abbreviation is「Jien-Otsu」. Just kidding—♪」. Again with this self performance!

"By the way......"

Fuyuumi brought her gaze towards Hime on the bed.

"What's with that girl? It's almost like she's immersed in another world."

Hime continued rolling inside the sheets, muttering: "Eita, I'm so happy you finally remembered the bonds from out past life. Yahoo, we’ll never be separated again."

The lines themselves, were quite like something that would come out of a romantic comedy, but「Hiyaha」was not like something the female lead would say. Was your past life from the end of the previous century?

"Well, today *was* rather hot......"

Masuzu lazily stared out of the window. Although she was the president, she didn’t try to follow the act of her club members at all.

Fuyuumi shook her head as if to say,「Deplorable」!

"This is what you call, ‘one rotten apple spoils the barrel.’ Akishino-san was always a very serious student!" [10]

Regardless of whether or not Hime was a serious student, she was definitely affected by our influence. Ever since joining「Jien-Otsu」Hime has definitely become more energetic than before. I thought this was a good change, but I guess from the perspective of the disciplinary committee, it was an「increase of problem behavior」.

"As I told you yesterday, it’s already decided that your club is going to be shut down. It’s something that you brought upon yourself, so you should seriously reflect on it!"

As soon as Fuyuumi Ai finished declaring this, Masuzu and Chiwa immediately looked upset.

Yes.

Yesterday after school, we「Jien-Otsu」was sentenced by Fuyuumi that「Club will be Disbanded as a Disciplinary Action」."

While there it was the「Dora live event」and「Toast Attack incident」, along with many other problematic occurrences, Masuzu’s younger sister · Mana, was the final blow. Although Masuzu tried to play down the incident, the rumors that our club「was up to no good」had already spread widely. In the end, they decided in the staff meeting that our club was going to be shut down.

And the person who took the lead in attacking us viciously was this Fuyuumi Ai. Although her voice played a very large role, the voice of the disciplinary committee president also couldn't be denied.

Yeah......

Oh well, after all, we have behaved rather poorly up until now.

"Come on, Natsukawa. There’s no reason to stay here, right."

"That’s true, being scolded is more than enough."

Maybe they realized that saying anything further was a waste of time, but Chiwa and Masuzu were thinking of leaving the infirmary.

Fuyuumi immediately stopped them:

"Take Akishino-san with you. She’s obviously not sick, but she’s taking a bed. It will give people trouble."

Chiwa replied somewhat impatiently:

"Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah."

"Answering once is enough."

"Woof!"

Fuyuumi’s slender eyes were stretched tight.

"You’re still resisting it with your attitude? You need to figure out that you need to be 「Pitiful Chihuahua」!"

"P-pitiful is saying too much, you idiot idiot!"

Chiwa forcibly raised her eyebrows to fight.

"Which of us is the idiot? Your wishful aim to be 「popular」 is not normal at all. Your brain is full with ridiculous thoughts!"

"And what’s wrong with that?! Becoming popular is a very exciting thing! Maybe I’ll receive a lot of food too!"

....

Was your original motivation for becoming popular really that, Chihuahua-san?……

The battle scene of monster-human conflict began to escalate, but Masuzu indifferently walked up to the bed.

I thought she would wake Hime up from drifting in her delusional world, but Masuzu actually sat straight down on the bed.

Then she began to slowly lift the sheets that covered Hime’s leg.

—Hmn?

Masuzu-san, what are you doing?

If you do that, I’ll see.

Hime wasn’t wearing anything under there.

I’ll see Hime’s smooth and naked butt.

There- it’s a flawless and beautiful butt just like I imagined. From my hiding place in the curtains, I could clearly see how delicate and compact it was, and so tender just like a plum…..

—That being said, what in the world are you doinggggggg?!?!?!?!?!!!?!??!!

Masuzu「smiled smugly」and stared at the shaking curtains where I hid.

She mouthed at me silently:

Are

You

Excited

Now?

—So this girl, so she did realized it?!

Hime had fallen asleep when we weren’t paying attention, and she was mumbling to herself while traveling in the dream world. Her butt was so shiny and thin, but she obviously had no idea it was exposed.

The girlfriend. Shows the ex-girlfriend’s ass to her boyfriend. To tease him.

I don't get any of this.

This mayhem far exceeds anything found in fiction.

This definitely wasn’t the kind of crude plot found in TV dramas or romantic comedies. Today I was experiencing a glimpse of something even worse.

That being said, it's my girlfriend this is about!

......Let's up break up soon......

At this time—

"Hahan, I get it!"

Chiwa exclaimed especially loudly.

Fuyuumi, in a daze, said:

"What did you realize?"

"In short, you’re jealous, right?"

"Eh?"

"You envy us who strive to be popular? The disciplinary committee’s members are all girls, everyone is scared of you, and you don’t get a chance to talk with the guys. That’s why you envy us, and want to shut down our Young Maiden’s Club.

"...... - ......"

Fuyuumi, who had formerly been countering articulately, suddenly started to tremble incessantly, and her face flushed red. This change was rather unusual. Not even mentioning her ears, even her neck was bright red.

"Could it be, did that hit the mark?"

After seeing an opportunity to go on the offensive, Masuzu immediately pursued it.

"When the disciplinary committee, which should be upholding the interests in the entire school, suddenly decides to shut down a legitimate club activity against the rights of ordinary students due to a 「private interest」—this is a problem. I should probably tell this to a teacher."

"If that’s the case, the club shut-down will be canceled!"

Wow! Chiwa’s fists were clenched, and it seemed like she was overjoyed with the victory.

Fuyuumi’s clenched fists trembled as she said:

"......Don’t take me for a fool."

"Huh?"

"Don’t take me for a fooooooooooll—! As for a mere boyfriend, of course I have one, you fool——————————!"

The infirmary suddenly fell silent.

Only the twilight cicadas chirped outside the window as the old-fashioned air conditioner 「whirred」 and echoed in the room.

"And that boyfriend, is he from our school?"

Masuzu broke the silence and asked.

"H-h-how can a boy the same grade as me be good enough for me? Y-Yes, he’s a college student!"

"Which university?"

Fuyuumi’s eyes wandered uncomfortably, as she said:

"......K-keio University?"

I don’t really know why she phrased it as a question.

"When you say Keio, do you mean that Keio University that the rich kids go to? Are you sure you don’t mean Tokyo University?"

"R-right? He’s the son of a big conglomerate. Even though we don’t meet each other that often because of our long-distance relationship, he texts me every day, is very gentle, and cherishes me very much!"

"That and that, it's very enviable ♪"

Although Masuzu had a grinning response on the surface…… her cheeks were subtly stiff. As an「anti-love」, she probably wanted to spit and say,「It's fine if you die」. Luckily, she could bear it.

"Of course. Compared to you all who can be satisfied with merely Kidou-kun, my level is entirely different."

"It's fine if you die, peh!"

She lost the limit of patience too fast!

"Really~? Do you really have a boyfriend~?"

Chiwa stared at Fuyuumi, her eyes revealing a significant amount of doubt.

"If that’s the case, why don’t you show me a picture from your phone? You should definitely have that kind of thing, right?"

"I'm sorry, I’m completely different from those bad students who bring their phones to school!"

"Then when are you going to meet each other during the summer?"

Tomorrow was the Haneoyama High School’s end-of-school assembly, which the day after marked the first day of the long-awaited summer vacation.

"I'm very busy in the summer with cram school! And why do I have to tell you that?"

"Well, can’t you just tell us your boyfriend’s name?"

As soon as Masuzu began to question her carefully, Fuyuumi bowed her head and began to tremble.

This time it wasn’t only the lips, even her shoulders were shaking.

After a period of silence that made even a spectator like me uncomfortable—

"...Michel."

"Eh?"

"His name is Murata · Michel · Daigoro! His mother is American. Isn't that cool? Isn't that great?!"

The infirmary was again entirely silent.

And this silence was different than before. It was a kind of speechless silence where nothing more can be said.

"Well, well, I think we should start going back now."

"Okay."

Chiwa easily agreed with Masuzu’s proposal, even though she had just been burning for a fight. Now it seemed like the moral was greatly reduced. Nevertheless, Chiwa still did not seem to believe in Fuyuumi, and her eyebrows looked like an inverted V-shape.

"Okay, Himecchi, lets go home—"

"......Ah, Mama?"

"How could there possibly be such a beautiful mother?"

Hime rubbed her sleepy eyes, and Chiwa handed Hime her folded uniform.

After Hime finished changing clothes (while I stared at the ceiling), and Masuzu and the others were about to leave the infirmary, Fuyuumi stopped them.

"Wait a moment."

"Eh, what else do you want?"

As soon as Fuyuumi met the eyes of Masuzu and the others, she immediately looked away.

With her head bowed and her fingers twiddling, she said:

"Ta…… And Kidou-kun? Today he isn't here?"

Eh, me?

Why is she asking for me?

She was always annoyed with Masuzu or Chiwa, but she shouldn’t have any conflicting issues with me.

"Who knows?"

Masuzu glanced grimly at the curtains where I was hiding, and said:

"It seems he went home earlier today."

"...... I see"

"Why are you looking for Ei-kun?"

"N-nothing. How could that possibly be?"

I don’t know why Fuyuumi said this angrily. Afterwards, she pushed aside Chiwa and the rest as she left the infirmary first.

"What was that? That attitude!"

"So outrageous."

"......So sleepy......"

The three of them each gave a complaint and left the infirmary one by one.

When Masuzu was closing the door, she stuck her head out from the doorway and said:

"Don't forget this, Eita."

She whispered these frightening words to me.

After I confirmed that the thumping noise of footsteps gradually moved far away, I liberated myself from the curtains and laid flat on the bed.

The wind from the air-conditioning blowing my cheek was very comfortable. Although I wasn’t Hime, I also really wanted to fall asleep.

"Ahh......"

Somehow, I just feel really exhausted.

Even though I was only listening to their dialogue, it felt like my HP was dropping madly.

To deal with those guys, one needed more than just a few lives.

After abolishing the「Jien-Otsu」, opportunities for these kinds of headaches should be reduced, right? Or will this intensify into chaos because they’ve lost the purpose of club activities?

…….Well, it wasn’t worth thinking about it. Asking for trouble was not the answer.

In either case, the day after tomorrow is summer vacation.

I was just like Fuyuumi. My summer would be spent buried in cram school. A month ago I began to study each cram school’s brochures to think over the most suitable plan. I was sorry for Masuzu and the others, but compared to a shut-down club and so forth, this was more important to me.

In order to obtain a recommendation for the Department of Medicine at the National University.

Goodbye「Jien-Otsu」.

Goodbye, mayhem.

My summer is going to be a productive one!

◆

With this kind of feeling, and a strong motivation to press forward, it came to the first morning of summer cram school.

In the crowd of students in the hall waiting for the start of cram school, I met a familiar face.

The first words she said were:

"W-why are *you* here?"

Fuyuumi Ai pointed with the finger in a familiar posture, and glared at me, as she still dutifully wore her uniform.

"What can be said? Well I'm here for summer cram school."

"T-t-t-that can't be. You co-co-couldn't be in Class Z, aren't you!?"

"It's in that Class Z that I'm in."

Fuyuumi's face lit up instantly, and excitedly raised her fist up.

"Yaa, this, awesome ♪ Ai-chan's great victory————————!"

The noisy hall suddenly became quiet.

"W-what is it? So suddenly?"

I asked her, greatly on edge. Fuyuumi suddenly became aware of herself, grabbed her head, and said:

"This isn't about a great victoryyyyyyyy——————! Right now that doesn't counttttttttt——————!"

"......"

Somehow, this one has some high tension.

It's causing everyone around me to stare, and its very embarrassing.

Fuyuumi cleared her throat with coughs, returned to her calm look and said:

"Why are you in the same class as me? You’re such a shameless person!"

"How would I know?"

I didn’t know why I felt so sad. Why did someone have to call the summer cram school that I picked「shameless」?

"Since you’re in class Z, your aspirations for college must be very high, right?"

The class Z that I signed up for was meant for people with high aspirations towards famous private and public universities, and included preparatory classes for the medical departments.

"I don’t have very clear-cut plans for where I want to go, but it’s better to have the best preparation."

"Yeah, it’s better to have more options."

"Although it’s possible to work hard after finding what you want to do, the exams are still competitive, right?"

"So, you are the type that goes for the pre-emptive strike."

"Aha! So true. I don’t want to wait until the whirlwind of the third year of high school [11]. Ah, that being said, you better not cause trouble in class you idiot!"

"What' with that, right off the bat?"

Even though it was clearly such a smooth conversation, she suddenly got mad at me and called me stupid!

"How can I talk with you peacefully? Especially with all of your hostile relations with me?!"

"Hostile?"

"Don’t play innocent. It’s obviously your Self Performing Club VS. our disciplinary committee." [12]

Ah......

Did this girl really want to fight each point one by one?

"Don't get close to me. I might get infected by your self performance thing!"

Without even time to tsukkomi about the Performance thing, let alone infect her, Fuyuumi hurriedly walked off.

Yeah

I guess I can see that "too damn serious" that Chiwa mentioned once.

At this time, someone patted me on the shoulder from behind me.

"Good morning, Eita."

My best friend Asoi Kaoru raised his small hand while smiling. His smile was cool and carefree as usual. I always felt if I received this every day, my blood would flow better.

"Even though the people here are only first years, there’s still a lot of people. Everyone really has impressive energy to study."

Kaoru wiped his sweat with a handkerchief as he looked around and spoke with a leisurely voice.

"I'm sorry, I always feel like I’m pushing you to accompany me."

"Not at all. My parents were urging me to go to summer school anyways, so when Eita asked me it was perfect."

Kaoru looked around the hall again.

"It seems like the only first-years from Hane High School are the two of us."

"No, I just met another one."

"Eh, who?"

"Fuyuumi Ai, from the disciplinary committee."

"So A-chan came! No, for real?"

Kaoru's eyes were opened with wide eyes.

"So, you know her?"

"Ah, this......"

Kaoru looked hesitant for a moment, and stammered:

"Yeah, I know her. A-chan and I— Fuyuumi Ai was my elementary school classmate."

This was something I never heard of, and he never revealed these kinds of feelings until today.

Kaoru was really a guy with many secrets.

"Ah— so A-chan is coming? What a coincidence, heh—"

Kaoru nodded repeatedly, but I didn't know why he snickered.

"Then I guess I'll go say hello."

"Okay, she's already in the classroom."

After Kaoru finished saying「thank you」, he excitedly ran away from the hall.

It was really surprising.

Kaoru actually knew Fuyuumi.

When I told him about how「Jien-Otsu」was going to be shut down, Kaoru didn't have any particular reaction. He only said,「On this issue, I won't voice an opinion」."

Now that I think of it, it was perhaps Kaoru's「neutral declaration」. If he was in a dilemma between me and Fuyuumi, it must have been very painful.

And like this, this was the opening prologue of my「summer」.

It wasn't a「summer mayhem」with Chiwa, Masuzu, and Hime.

But it was a「studious summer」with Fuyuumi Ai and Asoi Kaoru.

#1: It's Summer Cram School Class but Mayhem nonetheless

#1　夏期講習なのに修羅場

Summer vacations were always so long.

If you didn’t have close friends to frequently hang out with, but only nodding acquaintances among classmates, it wasn’t rare to see their appearance change in the months after saying goodbye. Girls often took the stage after dumping their summer boyfriends. These kinds of things happened very often.

Having said that—

"Waan——♪ These pork ribs! So tasty."

But to the Chihuahua who directly gobbled it straight from the electric hotplate, this should be irrelevant, right?

So like this I was still having dinner with Chiwa today. The fact that it was summer didn’t make a difference. The menu would not suddenly change into pasta or bamboo wheat noodles. It was consistently meat, meat, meat! As long as Chiwa was still my dining partner, I couldn’t escape from the fate of having fat along with animal proteins.

"Hey, Ei-kun."

"You already finished all of today's meat, so just eat some vegetables."

"Pfuu— I’m not talking about that—"

Even though Chiwa said that, her eyes kept being locked on the meat ribs still lying on my plate.

"What I wanted to say was: This year’s summer seems pretty relaxed—"

"Mhm, because there aren’t any club activities."

Chiwa squeezed her chopsticks and only approached in the direction of my plate. Just eat some vegetables!

"It was supposed to be a passionate hot summer dedicated to become popular —but now it’s really byoring[13]!"

"Don’t worry, you won’t become popular whether you have club activities or not."

"That's low! You don’t understand this type of things. If I just grow up and get a 'naisu bode[14]' then I’ll be fine!"

Chiwa’s shining eyes were fixated on my gaze: 'So give me some meat, okay?' It was so annoying. Just eat some vegetables!

"Ah— If only I had signed up for summer cram school."

"Why bring that up?"

Chiwa smiled and said:

"Then I’d be with Ei-kun every day!"

[...]

"[...] ...Well, that's as far as that discussion goes. Just eat some vegetables."

"Eh? Ei-kun? Why are you blushing?!"

Chiwa seized the opportunity and leaned forward.

And then she took advantage of my vulnerability, snatched the piece of rib and threw it into her mouth.

"Nn! Be ~ witch ~ ing."

"YOU, let that go! Quick, spit it out!"

Chiwa stuck her tongue out.

"I ate it already! Just by thinking it was Ei-kun’s meat, the degree of deliciousness increased three times!"

"Th-This little..."

Ever since that 'Jien-Otsu' had started, I felt like Chiwa became harder to deal with than before. This must've been Masuzu’s influence and all of that practice in causing mayhem. In my opinion, nothing was more troublesome than this.

While I reluctantly grilled some round slices of eggplant on the electric grill, I said:

"Now that you say summer cram school, I remember. That girl is also there."

"That girl?"

"Fuyuumi Ai."

As soon as she heard that name, Chiwa’s smiling face due to the ribs suddenly became more and more severe.

"Hey, so she’s not meeting up with that college student named Michael? Even though she has a boyfriend, how does she have time to study? I bet that in reality she was just lying!"

Chiwa’s voice was unusually sarcastic.

"Hey, have you always had a bad relationship with Fuyuumi?"

"How could it be good?"

Chiwa hit the table with a bang, and said:

"Do you remember the time when I was called to the staff office around the end of May?"

"*Of course*."

That was before 'Jien-Otsu' had been established.

It was when Chiwa recklessly believed everything from teen fashion magazines, like 'Looking up with the eyes is popucute!'. As a result, she went around glaring all boys with sharp eyes and stirred up trouble.

"The root of that matter was actually a fight with Fuyuumi. She had said that using 'gangster eyes to threaten everybody around, disrupts the discipline'!"

"I see."

It surely sounds like something she would say.

"It seemed like she was being especially strict towards me, as if she was in front of her nemesis."

"Have you done anything to make her dislike you?"

"I can’t think of anything—"

Chiwa suddenly sighed and said:

"And will our maiden’s club be shut down just like that?"

"The keys to the club room have already been confiscated, so there is nothing we can do about it."

"What's with that? Isn't Ei-kun frustrated as well?"

"*Not* at *all*."

In fact, I found that not being wrapped up in all of these strange club activities by the hands of these guys was quite marvelous. Like this, I could actually concentrate on studying this summer.

"But that someone was boasting about her boyfriend like that! How could *we*, having the goal of 'becoming the school’s most popular', accept it just like that?!"

"Maybe... But it doesn’t matter in any case, right? Just being popular won’t get you into college."

Chiwa hung her shoulders and said:

"Why is Ei-kun being so indifferent about these kinds of things? Have you never thought about 'becoming more popular'?"

"Never thought about that, *never* thought about it."

Just watching you all is enough for me.

Chiwa stared at me strangely:

"Actually, I wanted to ask you this before. Has Ei-kun ever been popular or been confessed to before Natsukawa?"

"How could that be possible?"

But after I said that—

"...Actually, there was one."

Chiwa suddenly left her seat, flustered, and said:

"You're kidding. Really? W-W-W-Who was it? Is it someone I know?"

"No, it was something from kindergarten."

Chiwa relaxed as soon as she heard that, sat down again and said:

"Whut, so it was like that? That's past history already."

"What's with that 'Whut'? To me it was a beautiful memory."

This was something that happened around ten years ago during this time of the year, at Wakaba Kindergarten in Class Star.

Even though I already forgot the girl's name and appearance, I'll always remember that she was a gentle and lovely girl. Well, maybe this was my brain only remembering the good parts.

After we finished eating, we began to clean up.

We split the chores 'in the usual formation': I washed the dishes at the sink while Chiwa wiped them dry and placed them on the shelves.

"Hey, Ei-kun, what are you doing on August 1st?"

"August 1st? Hm, I wonder what?"

"Forgotten it already? It's the annual Hane River fireworks festival!"

"Ah, so it's already that time of the year?"

Hane River was a first class river[15] that flowed through the center of Hane city. The fireworks festival on the riverbank was the largest summer activity in the city, known as the 'Hane Fire Festival'. The festival had many night market stalls and when I had been little I used to eagerly look forward to that day all the time.

"Since I couldn't go last year, can we go together this year?"

"With me?"

Chiwa’s father used to always take the two of us in elementary school, but ever since middle school we each went alone with our own friends.

"...T-This isn’t weird, right? Didn’t we use to go together all the time when we were little?"

Chiwa shifted shyly and blushed.

Well, it doesn't matter anyway. It's just some fireworks.

"So it's like that, Well, le—"

I was about to say 'well, let’s go together' when I suddenly realized:

—*Isn’t this a surefire 'flag' for mayhem?*

I don’t know why my mind noticed this potential development just now.

First, I’ll agree to go to the fireworks festival with Chiwa.

Second, Masuzu will invite me, but I’ll refuse her with 'I’m going with Chiwa' and Masuzu will get angry at me.

Third, Hime will invite me, but I’ll refuse her with 'I’m going with Chiwa' and Hime will curse me.

Fourth, on the day of the festival, they’ll both come to get in the way and it’ll be mayhem*!*

—*Bad, this is very bad.*

Chiwa looked as if she was in a daze and said:

"What is it, Ei-kun? You don’t look so good."

"Nothing, my Evil Eye[16] has predicted a terrible future."

"...?"

My Chuunibyou unconsciously relapsed, but we’ll put that aside for now.

This mayhem flag was seriously bad, I couldn't let it raise.

Saeko-san had once said: 'Whether it is in reality or games, one must carefully watch the flags!'

"Sorry, Chiwa, I'll pass for this year."

"Eeeh—! Then who are you going with? Natsukawa? Or maybe Himecchi?"

I simply shook my head and said:

"I’m not going to the fireworks festival. I’m going to be in a study room at cram school, studying."

"But this is a once in a year event! As for studying, you can study another day?"

"But summer cram school is once a year as well, right? After paying an expensive fee, I want to make it meaningful."

"You really are way too damn serious, Ei-kun."

"'Damn' is unnecessary there!"

Chiwa gave a big sigh and said: "Well there really is no way—"

'If anyone had enough time—', she murmured while wiping the utensils.

Sorry, Chiwa.

I've had enough mayhem.

This summer I officially want to live the ideal high school life!

◆

The second day of summer cram school. Formal lessons finally started.

Even though the registered capacity of the class was fifty people, the classroom had about a hundred seats in a huge room. The air conditioning was good, so were the soundproof walls. It was *the* environment for studying.

Fuyuumi Ai sat a little away from Kaoru and me and was wearing her uniform like the day before. Once, she was picked out by the teacher during math class and could finish the difficult problem after two or three moments by which she earned the teacher’s praise. From Kaoru’s report I heard that Fuyuumi was number three on the finals in the entire grade. She was a formidable opponent, and if I didn’t pay attention, my place as number one could possibly be taken away.

Thanks to this I became more enthusiastic and was able to be more concentrated during the difficult class material. I thought this kind of stimulating stuff was the merit of summer cram school, and it was worth the savings spent to attend these lectures.

After two 90-minutes periods ended, it was lunchtime. I ate lunch with Kaoru at the cram school cafeteria.

Kaoru sucked with a straw on an aluminum bad strawberry milk as he said:

"A-chan was really awesome back there."

I bit into the salmon and butter onigiri which I had made myself and answered:

"Yeah, using that kind of approach to solve a quadratic equation, you can tell she's a big shot."

When Kaoru heard that, he seemed to become very anxious and said:

"I wasn’t talking about studying~~!"

"Huh?"

"Look, during break time, wasn't she surrounded by all sorts of boys from other schools?"

"Aah, so it's like that."

Out of all of them, she was clearly hardworking. Against all of the plain girls, Fuyuumi’s silhouette stood out distinctly. Her appearance was delicate and particularly striking. Beside her were boys pretending to ask Fuyuumi questions about schoolwork, but in reality they were flirting with her. Every once in a while, the classroom echoed with an angry sound, 'go away'!

Kaoru happily chuckled and said:

"A-chan is cute, smart, and clearly popular. And even if she doesn't look like it, she's also great at cooking."

What?

Is Kaoru really praising Fuyuumi?

Even me, a slowpoke in that area, can see it. A clear case of 'someone praises the one he likes', isn't it?

In other words, could it be—

"...Kaoru."

"Yes? What?"

"'That's impossible', is what I was thinking, but do you happen to like Fuyuumi?"

I struck a bell.

Kaoru fell off the cafeteria chair, while crying loud.

"Are you okay, Kaoru?"

"It's *not* okay! Meanie!"

Kaoru found his seat again and exclaimed loudly:

"Why would you say something like that? Weren't you listening to me at all?"

"It's because I *was* listening that I thought that."

Kaoru angrily tore off a piece of sweet bread, and said:

"Then, let me ask you this, Eita!"

"O-Okay."

"What do *you* think when A-chan gets that popular with those other guys?"

"You're asking what *I* think of that?"

I took a bite off my omelette while I thought out-loud.

"It's kind of related to *that*."

"Ye, ye! And *'that'* is?"

"Those lovestruck-minded people who only believe in love. This kind of people are really hopeless."

Kaoru's eyes, which were originally immensely interested, rapidly dimmed down.

"To pull off numbers like those during summer cram school, what are they thinking? Even though they paid a lot of money to go to class, they're just wasting it. If you want a romantic comedy, go somewhere else."

"[...] [...] ...I understand, I guess that is true."

Kaoru gave up and crossed his legs while he continued sipping strawberry milk.

Apparently this answer wasn't the best.

Ehh.

What kind of answer was Kaoru hoping for? I didn't know what the correct answer should've been like.

At this time, Kaoru was looking diagonally past my back.

When I looked behind me by reflex, I saw a figure rapidly duck behind the cafeteria vending machine.

Near the coin chute, I saw a vaguely familiar waving skirt.

It was the skirt of the Hane High School uniform.

And, considering the circumstances, there was only one person who could meet this criteria here.

"Ah-haha— Eita, could you wait just a second?"

Kaoru stood up with a stiff smile and ran towards the vending machine.

The sound of two people quarreling mixed into the noise of the cafeteria, I could somewhat hear the contents of it.

— 'What are you doing? It was really hard for me to arrange this.'

— 'Y-You're just meddling in other people's business!'

— 'Again with that hard front? I wonder who was crying and begging on the phone last night?'

— '[...]'

— 'Well, go on then. And this time don't be stubborn.'

— 'N-N-No, I can't! No! I'm not mentally ready yet!'

— 'Then, when will it be all right?'

— 'T-Tomorrow I'll give it my best!'

— 'That's no good! You *do* understand that the clock's ticking?!'

It seemed like the argument was quite intense.

What is 'that's no good' supposed to mean?

Give it your best tomorrow, was that about to studying?

If that's the case, keeping this mindset going would definitely be bad. Exactly like Kaoru said, time moves forward. In the first part of 'JoJo's Bizarre Adventures', there was a similar kind of plot. When the shy teenager Poco was reprimanded by his sister: 'To-... Tomorrow I'll do-... I'll do it!', 'Which tomorrow are you talking about?'[17]

"S-Sorry to keep you waiting, Eita."

"[...]"

Fuyuumi Ai was dragged and tugged by Kaoru, and finally taken in front of me.

She was blushing, maybe because of the argument from moments ago.

"Yo, Fuyuumi."

"[...] [...]"

Fuyuumi’s kept silent with a stern face and avoided my eyes.

"A-A-chan? What about a greeting now?"

"[...] [...] BAKA, BAKA!"

"That doesn't qualify as a greeting, no? No? That's not it, no?!"

"O-Okay, Kaoru! Calm down."

I grabbed Kaoru’s shoulders to calm him down and guided him to his seat; Fuyuumi continued to give a tsuntsun aura as she sat next to Kaoru.

"Well..."

Feeling greatly unsettled, I looked back and forth between those two.

So, what should I speak about with Fuyuumi?

Normally, Kaoru would help find some kind of subject to talk about, but today was definitely different from normal.

In the end, it’ll be 'LET’S TALK'.

"Fuyuumi, you went to the same elementary school as Kaoru?"

"Yes, is there a problem with that?"

"[...] ...It's all right, you know, it's all right.[18]"

What's with this girl? Why does she seem like she always wants to pick a fight?

I couldn't even get to my usual way of speaking, 'me' is 'ore'[19]

By then, Kaoru finally returned to his usual self after having cleared his throat with a 'ehem'.

"My friendship with A-chan started in elementary school when we were in the same class. We were classmates until fourth grade."

"He, that's quite the relation."

Incidentally, I only had been in the same class as Chiwa three times up until sixth grade.

"During the first semester of fifth grade, A-chan’s family moved to another district, so we went to different schools in middle school. She came back to this city this spring."

"I see."

If she didn’t move, she possibly could have attended the same middle school like Chiwa and me.

"So to summarize, Fuyuumi and Kaoru are childhood friends."

At this time, Fuyuumi’s bowed head suddenly stiffened.

She raised her head and stared at me with a terrible look.

"...W-What is it...?"

"Nothing. At. All."

"What’s wrong with being childhood friends?"

"There's! Absolutely! Nothing! Wrong! At! All!"

"[...]"

No matter how you look at it, there's something...

Is 'childhood friend' a bad word for this girl?

So it'd be better to just change the subject.

"Ah, right, Fuyuumi."

"*...What*?"

"I heard you have a boyfriend in college, right? His name's Michel?"

The sound of several things falling to the ground could be heard, along with some spitting sounds. Kaoru gave an astonished sound and slid off of his chair again.

This time it was even worse than before and caused everyone in the noisy cafeteria to suddenly become silent. Everyone stared at Kaoru, wanting to know what was going on. Only Fuyuumi seemed embarrassed, lowering her head.

"A-Are you okay, Kaoru?"

Kaoru smiled stiffly and said: "Ahahahahaha, I’m fine, I’m fine—" while he stood up.

"Heh, what? A-chan's boyfriend? What's up with *that*? Where did you hear that? *Where* did you hear that—?!"

"I heard Chiwa mention it."

Of course I couldn’t say that I overheard it while I was hiding out in the infirmary, so I phrased it like this.

"A-chan, can you come with me to the hallway for a second?"

Kaoru said this with a broad, sparkling smile on his face and an devilish aura.

H-How scary.

Even though we knew each other ever since the start of our third year in middle school, I had never seen such a frightening Kaoru.

"Eita, can you wait for us for a moment? I have something to say to Fuyuumi, *alone*."

Kaoru dragged the crestfallen Fuyuumi into the hallway. *Maybe I am overly suspicious, but his behavior was even rougher than last time.*

Kaoru didn’t know his childhood friend had a boyfriend…

But maybe this is how it always is childhood friends of the other gender. Chiwa and I are a special case, but generally it'd be very embarrassing to talk about romantic stuff.

The sounds of two people could faintly be heard from the hallway. They seemed forget about me as they talked, and the volumes of their voices was becoming quite high. They probably didn’t notice.

— 'Hey-hey, what boyfriend? What’s with that?'

— 'There’s nothing I can do about it! It just turned out that way!'

— 'What were you thinking? You on your own set up a trap for *yourself*. Don't you have any determination at all?'

— 'O-Of course I do!'

— 'There's little time left until that 'promised day', right?'

— 'True, that's why I... [...]'

Then Fuyuumi’s voice became soft and I couldn’t hear it.

The promised day?

What does that mean? That was really an unusual phrasing.

If it was Hime, she would probably say 'the final showdown between the Evil Dragon Clan and the Holy Dragon Clan has finally come! That is the Twilight of the Gods—!', that kind of complex chuunibyou lines.

Fuyuumi couldn’t also be one of those chuunibyou people whose brains were filled with delusions, right?

...No, that's just impossible. For someone who's known as the disciplinary committee's devil, becoming such an irrational person is impossible.

— 'I said it yesterday. Only this once I'll pay for the favor.'

— 'I know.'

— 'I can only be your ally during this summer.'

— 'I do know.'

— 'I’ll make opportunities for you to speak, for what comes after this - you have to earn it yourself.'

It seemed like they finished negotiating.

When Kaoru returned to his seat, his expression seemed quite calm. Perhaps because he was done saying everything he wanted. Even Fuyuumi, who had been tsuntsun moments ago, seemed willing to look into my eyes.

Fuyuumi took a cute pink bento box out of her bag. Inside were an omelette, octopus sausage, onigiri, and mini tomatoes. Everything was smaller-sized than normal and completely different from the amount of food in Chiwa’s bento. People would hardly be able to believe these were both bentos belonging to girls.

While I was wondering if the amount of food was really enough, Fuyuumi placed the bento box in front of me without hesitation 'zui', and said:

"K-K-Kidou-kun!"

"Y-Yeas?"

Because her facial expression was too serious, the sound of my response was distorted.

"Please feel free to pick anything!"

"...Eh?"

"Please feel free to pick anythiiiiing———!"

"[...]"

Even though I couldn’t quite grasp the situation, it seemed like she meant to say 'eat my bento box'!

"Is that all right? With such small portion won't hardly anything be left for you?"

When Kaoru heard this, he responded with the same serious face as Fuyuumi:

"Just eat, Eita! I’ll let A-chan have some of the jam bread I brought!"

"You're mistaking the means for the end..."

Anyways, this wasn’t the kind of atmosphere where I could just refuse.

I took a piece of omelette wrapped in basil leaves from the bento box.

"Then I’ll swap this with you."

I took a piece of fried food from my own bento and stuffed it in the empty space where the omelette came from.

Fuyuumi looked dumbstruck as she stared at my face.

"Is that all right?"

"Okay, we’ll consider it a food exchange."

I placed the omlette into my mouth. The amount of salt was just perfect, accompanied with the wonderful aroma of basil leaves in the mouth.

"Hmn, quite good."

"REALLY?"

"Did you make this? I can see why Kaoru was praising you."

I wasn't one of those people who liked sweet eggs, but these weren’t bad at all.

Fuyuumi began to tremble, which might make one think she was having convulsions. She immediately picked up my fried food and put it in her mouth.

She didn’t even properly chew before she swallowed it, and then she stood up.

"I’m going to run outside."

"Huh?"

"I'M GOING TO RUN OUTSIIIIIIDE——!"

Fuyuumi leaped and jumped as she left the cafeteria, and it seemed like her head almost hit the ceiling.

"W-What is she doing…?"

"Ah, what could it be? Isn't she just *extremely happy*?"

Kaoru suppressed some laughter in his throat while he spoke.

"Happy about what?"

"But isn't it obviously because Eita praised a dish she made?"

"...?"

Why?

I am associated with Self-Performing Group[20]*, the considered enemy of the disciplinary committee. What was there to be happy about, after she received my praise?*

Could it be that she thought: 'If I can receive the praise of even my enemy, then my cooking skills are really good'!?

"Hey, Eita."

Kaoru’s face suddenly became serious:

"Even though A-chan can be stubborn, she definitely isn’t a bad person."

"That's what it seems like."

If she can spring up and down so happily in front of others, I don’t think she can be a bad person.

"If she has a tsuntsun attitude, there’s definitely a reason for that. I hope you can think about this reason *really carefully*."

"What reason?"

Kaoru grinned with a 'can't you think about it' smile.

When he spoke in just whispers, I felt like recently: Kaoru had been involved in many secrets.

"...Well, it's fine."

Just understanding that Fuyuumi isn’t a bad person is enough. And this is a rare summer spent taking cram school classes, so it would be stupid to waste it with fighting. If I can become friends with Fuyuumi, we may be able to help each other *out with school work.*

Huhuhu[21]*.*

I didn’t imagine it’d feel so good without club activities.

This is it.

The summer I've always dreamed of, it's like this*!*

◆

However, just as I was speaking of those pleasant winds, I was immediately knocked back into hell.

At the start of afternoon classes, I received a text message.

This famous RPG’s background music 'you have equipped a cursed weapon'[22], was the ringtone I set that girl’s text messages to. As soon as I heard that music, my clear-blue-sky mood suddenly turned into a downpour.

[From] oraoraoraoraoraoraoraoraoraora@xxxx.mail.ne.jp

[Subject] ドドドドドド・・・[23]

[Text] Over there, is there anyone?[24]

Right.

I forgot.

After thinking about it, of course I should have expected it.

I realized that before me was a harsh truth.

——Even if there weren’t any club activities, my girlfriend wouldn’t just disappear.

Let me repeat it again.

Even if there weren’t any club activities, my *girlfriend* wouln’t just disappear—!

#2: At a Café with My Girlfriend is Mayhem

#2 彼女と喫茶店で修羅場

This happened at the end of the second day of summer cram school. After I ate dinner with Chiwa, I went to my room to prepare for the next day’s class.

The curse ringtone echoed again, it was definitely a mail from her.

[Subject] Untitled

[Text] I've got your daughter.

If you want her back, you must come alone to the coffee shop in front of the station tonight at eight o’clock.

Aaah— This is certainly quite bothersome.

I turned the page of my math textbook while I typed a reply with the other hand.

[Subject] Re: Untitled

[Text] I have no daughter.

If you want to kill her, cut her down as you please.

After about ten seconds, the cursed music sounded again.

Yareyare, I have no choice but open the message...

[Subject] UNTITLED

[Text] I've got my daughter.

If you want her to go back, then do what I wrote above.

"I don’t know about any daughter of yours!"

I said aloud, tsukkomi-ing in my text message.

Anyway, you don’t have any daughter...

After all, why was her tone while texting to her boyfriend the same as a kidnapper's sending threatening letters?

There is no other way. I better reject her clearly.

[Subject] Re: UNTITLED

[Text] Right now I'm busy studying and reviewing my cram school notes.

I am very sorry, but I’ll talk to you later.'

A few minutes later, I received a rather longish text message.

[Subject] Untitled

[Text] Understood.

Please give it your best with your studies.

I hope you do not become too distraught.

When you are tired, you can listen to the summer season insects cricketing outside.

You’ll definitely hear something like this.

♪ Notes, Notes, Notes~

♪ Dark, Dark, Dark, History, History~

♪ Revealed, Revealed, Revealed, Will be~

I then immediately replied:

[Subject] Re: Untitled

[Text] I wil immediatelyg o met yo,u Masuzu-sama![25]

◆

Based on the 'coffee shop in front of the train station', there were actually two stores that met this criteria. But since it was Masuzu who proposed this, it was possible to narrow down the stores to one— And that was the coffee chain-store right after the fork in the road. Even though compared to ordinary stores the taste and price weren't worth mentioning, it often seemed deserted because customers were frequently snatched away by neighboring restaurants. This seemed to be something Masuzu would like.

When I opened the door, I was surprised to find it actually quite crowded. Though, as it was the summer, the store was filled with high school couples hanging out at night. The office worker who was wearing a suit and sat in a corner, seemed to be very pitiful, sipping coffee in a poor mood.

—At this time.

"Yo, Masuzu."

I said hello to my 'girlfriend' who was sitting on a chair near the window. Even though it was such a crowded place, I could immediately find her thanks to her very conspicuous silver hair, blue eyes, and intense scent.

She really feels 'superior' to everyone around her...

If I were a girl, I definitely wouldn't want to be around that atmosphere.

But now that I thought about it, Chiwa and Hime were really amazing.

"Too slow, *Eita*."

Masuzu spoke in a displeased voice and with a piercing gaze she looked at me fiercely.

"From the time you replied to my text to now it took you eleven minutes, 38.39 seconds to get here. What's the meaning of this?"

Wow—

So detailed—

"What could I have done? From my house to here, no matter how much I rush, it takes at least ten minutes."

"Such a useless man. Can't you be like Vanilla Ice[26] and move through dark space?"

"I'm sorry, I'm not a 'stand' user."

"Hmph, you really are a 'useless man', then."

"Hmm, so 'not being a user' actually means *that*[27]!"

"That was actually quite well said!"

Ever since the incident with that younger sister of hers, Masuzu pretty much settled on calling each other by our first names and tongue leashing whenever we were alone.

She had said: 'As long as other people see us, we'll act like lovers', 'When the two of us are alone, we'll treat each other coldly.'

Anyways, she wasn't a real girlfriend, so it didn't matter if she gave me the cold shoulder… However, as of lately I felt as if her poisonous tongue's destructive power had greatly increased.

"Don’t stand there in a daze, won't you sit down?"

"Aah, right."

The waiter brought ice water and I ordered some cola. Then I sat opposite of Masuzu.

"During the time I was waiting for you, I was hit on by those love-struck people three times. So dirty. How do you intend to make it up to me?"

"Three times is less than usual. Anyway, should have just hunted them down."

"Certainly! This is the same as preaching a new religion. One has to casually go along and force them to buy water and pots to bear it."

"I at least expect that you aren't doing deals with some pots..."

At this point, I realized the guests around us were staring at me. 'Is that her boyfriend?', 'He's so plain'. I could hear this kind of comments float over. Whenever I went on dates with Masuzu, this was the common course. There was one time when a middle school girl said, 'so disappointing—', 'so depressing—!' After that, it took me a long time to restore my self-confideeeeeeence!

"...Right, Masuzu. What did you want to talk about?"

"Ara?"

Thus, Masuzu smiled, tilted her head and said:

"You forgot already? Eita. You still 'owe me one'."

"—?!"

Damn!

I have a vague feeling that she is referring to that, but does she actually mean the incident at the infirmary?

"When you saw Akishino-san’s butt, were you really excited...?"

Masuzu’s frigid eyes pierced through me.

"You were really horny that night when you went to bed, right? So nasty."

"I wasn't fired up in the least!"

"If I cause your cornea to become blind and get you a transplant, you'll probably only see Akishino-san's butt, right?"

"What terrible pornography."

But if that really were the case, the number of boys who would want a transplant would skyrocket.

After all, it was really good stuff...

"There you have it, you are excited *again*."

"—!"

Damn, am I even showing it on my face?

"You're so perverted, just seeing you face to face might make me pregnant."

"How could that even be possible?!"

"Who knows, you are merely someone whose brain is totally filled with female asses."

"That's why I said it isn't like that!"

"All lies. More than one or two people have seen you wear that t-shirt which says 'butt!'. You've even said: 'Let's play that butt specialty cake' while smiling and assaulting a group of elementary school girls."

"What is this kind of pervertedness? Is this how you see me in your head?"

Masuzu-san's ability to act as if 'she was wrongly accused' suddenly exploded in the coffee shop.

The waitress that delivered the coke that I ordered had a look that made me feel very, very uncomfortable.

Ahhh, I'll never be able to come to this store again…

"Therefore, the method to repay that debt that you have towards me—"

Masuzu drank the cold water that was just re-filled, and then said with a sigh:

"Please accompany me to the Hane River fireworks festival on August, 1st."

"[...] ...Excellent."

"What do you mean by 'excellent'?"

"Nothing, I was just talking to myself."

The hunch I had last night about the 'flag raised' was right.

If I had accepted Chiwa's request back then, then it would have been bad.

"Sorry, I can't do it. That day I'll be at the cram school studying."

"Studying? You're using that to refuse a date with your girlfriend?"

"Since I paid a lot of money to go to summer school, I want to obtain the maximum results."

"But, is *that* true?"

Masuzu frowned and spoke:

"It couldn't be possible that you instead already have a date with Harusaki-san or Akishino-san on that evening?"

"I swear I doin't. If you don't believe me, you can confirm it with Chiwa and Hime."

Masuzu stared straight at my face, but finally let out a small sigh.

"I understand. Even though it's a pity, I guess I'll go to the fireworks festival by myself."

"Sorry."

Great, did I get out of it smoothly?

"Having said that, I thought for sure you hated those types of events."

"Ara, that’s not true at all."

Masuzu seemed entranced as she looked around the shop that was full of couples, and said:

"Foaming blood red fireworks that blossom on the ground… Fufufu! That certainly is quite beautiful."

"Just what type of joyful attitude is that towards a fireworks festival!?"

"Why do you even have to ask? Of course it’s to drown those stupidly happy couples in a sea of blood, not *a single one* will escape."

"[...]"

What is this?

A crime threat.

Right in front of me, my girlfriend joyfully stated a crime threat…

"Because their heads will be in the clouds like idiots, their bodies will be wide open, that's what I'm expecting."

"Your target is really specific, oi! You don’t really intend to carry this out, do you?"

Should I go to the police now? Is this also her boyfriend's responsibility?

"———Of course not. Naturally, this is a joke."

Thus, Masuzu shrugged her shoulders slightly and said:

"Even if we use force to eliminate followers of the love-struck religion, there's no meaning to it. It's naturally better to use 'Jien-Otsu''s activities to leave a mark."

"...Don’t scare me like that..."

Relieved, I rubbed my chest. It looked like I wouldn’t become a criminal boyfriend.

"But, 'Jien-Otsu' is no more."

Masuzu used her fingers to poke a droplet of water on her glass cup, sighed, and said:

"I thought that solving Mana's issue would be all. I didn't think Fuyuumi Ai would be next. The seeds of trouble sprout one after another, it's seemingly endless."

"You don't have any countermeasures? Asides from committing a crime."

"Well, it's not that there aren't *any*."

Masuzu raised three fingers, then she said:

"The first option is that we have activities as a group, but not officially as a club."

"Ah, I see."

Wasn't that solution fine?

If they weren't a club activity, it would just be 'playing with friends'. As long as they don't get too out of hand in school, the disciplinary committee can't make too many remarks.

"However, this has a major flaw."

"Which is?"

"Because there is no club room, there is no place to store the Holy Bible of popular people, 'JoJo'. As a result, this plan is NG[28]."

"...That counts as a flaw?"

It didn't really matter, and she had a full set at her house.

"The second option is the creation of a new club."

"Eh, even though our club has just been shut down?"

"The name will be the 'Society for the Self-Creation of Young Maidens Again'."

"Aren't you just adding one or two words?"

It didn't matter if it was Re-Self-Creation, it was still first Self-Creation, and it would always be 'Jien-Otsu'.

"But you can't just change the name, right? If the content doesn't change, the disciplinary committee will just intervene again."

"As a result, the problem will just return to the beginning again, so the best option is the third way."

Masuzu’s pupils flashed with light.

"Find out the disciplinary committee member Fuyuumi Ai’s weakness."

"In the end it’s just a crime. If it were that easy to find people’s weaknesses, no one would have to work so hard, right?"

"That’s not necessarily true."

Masuzu gave an intriguing smile.

"Fuyuumi Ai was boasting in the infirmary, 'of course I have a mere boyfriend'. Do you remember that?"

"Yeah, I remember, his name was Michel?"

"Yes, Daigoro."

Masuzu took out a little notebook and flipped through the pages, and said:

"Actually, the day we didn’t have school, Harusaki-san and I were asking all around about Fuyuumi Ai."

"So you actually did that kind of thing?"

Masuzu read her notes aloud:

"Fuyuumi Ai, first year class 3. Belongs to the disciplinary committee, and has never participated in a club. Lives in a single parent home and her family relations include a father and a little brother. Because of her father’s work, they move frequently. From Aomori in the north to Nagasaki in the south, they have moved a total of seven times. Even though they came and went from the mountain city of Hanenoyama several times, they have come back to their residence here for the start of high school."

"Following one’s father everywhere must be really hard to do."

"Really? Being able to stay domestically in Japanese borders is pretty convenient already."

"[...]"

When Masuzu, having had returned from somewhere abroad, said this, I was left speechless.

This girl’s family seemed to be very complicated.

"Because of this, we know that Fuyuumi Ai does not know that many people. It seems like the only person she knows is her close friend Asoi Kaoru. From first grade to fourth grade, they were in the same class."

"Yeah, I already heard Kaoru talk about it."

"I also intended to ask Asoi-kun, but I did not realize he would avoid me so skillfully. He really is impressive."

"Hahaha, he is my best friend after all!"

"Those two things don’t matter now."

"...Ah, really?"

After being shot down so hard, I felt a little sad.

"But I did obtain some very important intelligence from Fuyuumi Ai’s classmates."

"What intelligence?"

"They've *never* heard anything at all about this so-called boyfriend 'Daigoro'."

"That’s not really a clue, right?"

Masuzu winked and said:

"It's because they never heard anything, that this is a point which deserves focus."

What did she mean? I couldn’t see through her logic.

"From the tone she had when she was showing off her boyfriend, Fuyuumi Ai is 'lovestruck'. You thought so too, right?"

"That... Well, it's probably right."

Indeed.

She did show off Michel to Chiwa without restraint.

If one took love as a kind of 'status' and showed it off as if it was 'jewelry', this was a habit that was associated with love-struck people.

"Nevertheless, why do you think it’s significant that no one else knows about the Daigoro thing?"

"Is she keeping her boyfriend a secret from her classmates? And yet she said it so clearly to us, who are her enemies?"

"Ah..."

Now that she mentioned it, it was weird.

Even Kaoru, who was so close to her, didn’t seem to know about Michel.

Why did she say it to Masuzu and the others?

"There is only one answer, and that is *Daigoro does not exist*. In other word— he was a fictional character that Fuyuumi made up."

"So rather than 'acting as a boyfriend', it’s outright a 'false boyfriend'..."

Self-created, fake, imaginary. I was surrounded by all these kinds of things.

"This is the point where I want to request something from Eita."

Masuzu’s tone became solemn as she said:

"I want you to get close to Fuyuumi Ai and obtain proof that Daigoro’s existence is a lie."

"When you say get close to her, how do I do that?"

"It’s easy, right? Because you’re in the same class as her in summer cram school."

"*How come* you already know that?"

She was well-informed as always.

How did this girl set up her intelligence network? Even though she had no friends... It was really a mystery where she obtained her information from.

"Since you rejected my request to go to the fireworks festival, you should at least do this small thing for me."

"...I understand."

I sighed.

"But, let's say that I discover that Fuyuumi really doesn't have a boyfriend."

"Ara, then what?"

"Seeing that she's such a serious and responsible person. Why would she spread these kinds of lies which will soon enough be exposed?"

"She *would* lie."

Masuzu unhesitatingly insisted.

"In this world, there isn't such a thing as a woman that does not lie."

"[...]"

Is that true?

"Whatever, for Eita who's only interested in girls' butts, he surely won’t understand."

"WHAT'S WITH THOSE FALSE ACCUSATIONS?!"

"Eita: 'There doesn't exist a girl whose butt isn't beautiful!' (Wink)."

"THAT'S WHY I KEEP TELLING YOU NOT TO ATTRIBUTE STRANGE LINES TO PEOPLE—!"

So cruel!

Quite certainly, the destructive power of her poisonous tongue was several times greater than ever!

I fearfully raised my hands and said:

"Then, Masuzu-san, this humble me also has something that I want to ask as a favor."

"What is it?"

"Would it trouble you to return to the tone you used to speak with in the beginning...?"

Otherwise, I'd end up adopting that kind of manners!

"Why?"

"Well, I feel like, I guess, I should say your tone is too cold now? Your poisonous tongue has released its limiter? Or should I say I'm almost about to get a broken heart from it?"

Masuzu grunted, brought one hand to her cheek, and looked pensive for a moment.

I— even though I was just insulted by her, I was attracted to how her face looked.

She looked listless, her gaze wavering, as she sighed slightly. She looked just like an actress.

Even though I could praise her looks as beautiful, I didn't only just mean it like that.

She looked just like she was 'expressing something'.

As for what she was expressing, I can't possibly know.

"Well then."

Masuzu said simply.

"I'll think about."

As she stared out of the window I saw the profile of her face and I still felt like it was a man-made thing.

So beautiful.

◆

Later, we chatted aimlessly for thirty minutes before we finished.

Being on the way home by myself, I noticed——

"Things have just become troublesome again..."

Thanks to Kaoru, I was about to live in harmony with Fuyuumi. But now it had become a 'dilemma' once more.

The situation was no different from the first semester.

No, it was worse.

Why? I should neither have the 'physique that attracted mayhem' nor the personality and so on.

Ever since I had become Masuzu’s fake boyfriend, haven't I kept running into this kind of stuff?

"I-I’m not going to admit I lost..."

I looked up to the stars' summer constellations and secretly vowed.

How could I just lose to some mayhem?

I would definitely make my ideal summer!

#3: Love Master's Laugh is Mayhem

#3 ラブマスターが笑う修羅場

At the end of the third day of summer cram school.

After the fifth 90-minute lecture, I was exhausted. Since Chiwa was eating out with her parents today, it would have been cumbersome to prepare food for just one person. So I was thinking about going to eat out somewhere.

I was wondering where to eat as I sat in my seat surrounded by rows of people who were leaving the classroom. Kaoru and Fuyuumi approached me to say something.

"Eita, do you have some free time today?"

"Well, I was thinking about eating somewhere and then go home."

"Is that so?! That’s just perfect. A-chan!"

Hence, Kaoru elbowed Fuyuumi, who stood next to him.

Fuyuumi was in a daze and said:

"What’s just perfect?"

"Hey, didn’t we just talk about having something to eat before we go home?"

"That’s the first time I heard that?"

Kaoru’s smile froze.

Then he suddenly lowered his voice, leaned his face so close to Fuyuumi that their foreheads almost stuck together, and said:

"Wasn't it the same like Eita just said~? Weren't we talking about having a piece to eat as well~? *Don't you think* this is a good opportunity~?"

"A-Ah! S-So it's about that!"

Fuyuumi nodded, flustered.

She then straightened up, faced me and said:

"It can't be helped! I'll go together with you!"

"...Wow, sounds so fun."

Might as well, the more the merrier.

Also just yesterday Masuzu told me to confirm 'whether Fuyuumi has a boyfriend' or not. So I have to take care of that, too.

The three of us left the classroom side by side.

As we walked through the corridors, I could immediately feel the eyes of other lecture students on us. The girls glance at Kaoru, while the boys stared at Fuyuumi, certainly these two were attractive. I even heard someone say 'they're so well-matched—'. Incidentally, I also heard some other voices say 'who's that failure on their side?' 'He's ruining the picture. I wished he got out of the way.' Just shut up, you idiotic idiots!

We walked into a family restaurant near the cram school. Maybe because it was still rather early, the restaurant wasn't that crowded. We ordered our respective meals and large fries that everyone could share. Then we went to the soda fountain to get our drinks. These were typical actions high school students made in family restaurants.

"I've always wanted to ask this."

I said to Fuyuumi, who sat across from me. We were sitting in a four-seat box table.

"Why do you always wear your uniform?"

"Isn't it written in the school rules that 'a student must wear their uniform when they go out'?"

"Not even half of the students follow that rule."

Of course, Kaoru and I were wearing plain regular clothes.

"Can the disciplinary committee even regulate these kinds of things?"

"Of course not, since we're outside the school."

"So you don't have to follow the school rules so strictly. Why don't you wear regular clothes?"

When Fuyuumi heard this, she whispered, her body slightly shaking:

"Y-You won’t look down on me and think I’m a bad student?"

"Why would I think that? In that case you would merely not wear your uniform."

"For real?"

"Why would I lie?"

"[...] ...I see? So it's like that."

Fuyuumi seemed to have a happy smile.

But to mention it, I remembered that she didn’t bring her cell phone to school. While it was definitely a violation of school rules... shouldn't it be enough to just turn off the phone during class time?

"So when you go on dates, do you wear your uniform?"

"Date?"

Fuyuumi blankly repeated what I said.

"Ah, you know, your college boyfriend Michel. Do you wear your uniform when you go on dates with him?"

"[...] [...] ...Ah! T-That! That kind of date!"

Of course it's that kind of date. Are there even other kinds of dates?

"Eita, to be honest about that issue."

Kaoru, who sat next me, interrupted seriously:

"There’s a little misunderstanding about this. It’s better to clarify this, right, A-chan?"

"...I *know*."

Fuyuumi swallowed her saliva and stared at my face.

"In fact, about that Michel thing..."

What was it? If she wanted to talk about her boyfriend, it was a big help for me.

"M-Michel, in fact, about that... in reality—"

————*In reality,* what*?*

I turned around to the voice behind me, and found Chiwa standing there with her arms folded. She looked rather dressed up, as if she was going out.

"Chiwa, why are you here? Aren’t you eating with your parents today?"

"Ah, we’ll be going to a steakhouse in a bit. But I just happened to see Ei-kun and you all here."

I looked out the window and saw Chiwa’s parents smiling and waving at me. I hurriedly waved hello.

Chiwa’s eyes were filled with suspicion as she stared at Fuyuumi and said:

"So, in reality *what*? That Michel in reality is a lie, something like that?"

"T-That..."

Fuyuumi bowed, full of embarrassment.

I couldn’t help but feel sorry for her:

"Hey, Chiwa, don’t do that. If you’re that overbearing, you won’t let her say anything."

"Is Ei-kun siding with the disciplinary committee? It's because of those people that our Maiden's Club[29] is in danger."

"This talk is totally different from that. And first thing, just look at her."

I said, pointing at Fuyuumi’s clothes.

"Even in the summer holidays, she still follows the school rules to this point and wears her uniform. There’s no one as honest and straightforward like her. Thus, naturally she wouldn't fall into a silly lie like that."

I said again what I told Masuzu last night and Fuyuumi immediately began to quiver with her head lowered.

"Really~? Are you sure she didn’t try to lie and flaunt herself because Natsukawa and I were interrogating her?"

"People who try to lie and flaunt themselves don’t have any other qualities to be proud of. Fuyuumi’s grades are at the top, and she is an admirable, responsible disciplinary committee member. So there’s no reason for her to lie ——Right, Fuyuumi?"

When Fuyuumi heard this, her body suddenly stopped trembling.

Under Chiwa's and my eyes, Fuyuumi slowly raised her head and said:

"T-That’s right! As the number three in our school grade and as a disciplinary committee member, I am honest. It’s impossible for me to get carried away with lying and flaunting about myself like an self-pleased empty-headed stupid woman! Women who spray such lies are just the worse! Street trash! I-I-It would be better if they die ——————!"

"[...]"

Uh, I didn’t say something to that extent.

Kaoru pulled on Fuyuumi’s arm and said:

"O-Okay, A-Chan, that’s enough."

"Isn't it fine?! That girl alone is the one I can never allow myself losing to!"

Pressed by Fuyuumi’s excitement, Chiwa backed up and said:

"T-Then what were you about to say?"

"It's obviously about that! I was just saying how Michel and I are ~ really ~ suuper ~ love~love! In August he’ll come home, so we already planned a lot of dates for then!"

Fuyuumi took advantage of the moment and slowly approached Chiwa. At this moment, a new figure approached Fuyuumi from behind.

——Would appreciate more details about that talk.

Even on such a hot day, Hime’s poker face wasn’t any different. As she blankly stood there, she looked dressed like a real princess with a luxuriously ornamented blouse and a matching long, black skirt.

"Hime, why are you here?"

"I was exploring point YBK when I felt a 'Dragon Fighting Spirit', and then I noticed Eita. Hug me tightly, 'kay?"

"Ah, will do the next time."

"What a pity... Anyway—"

Hime’s attention tuned to the dazed Fuyuumi:

"I am very interested in hearing about Michel."

"Ah?"

"I still do not understand these things of this world, so I want to absorb all sorts of experiences from knowledgeable modern-day people, such as you."

Fuyuumi opened her mouth wide, saying stiffly:

"Wait, Hime, where did you get that idea from?"

"Yesterday, the President sent me a text message. She said Fuyuumi Ai was very experienced in love, so she's in essence the best talent to learn from on how to become 'popular'."

So it was Masuzu who encouraged her?

I don’t know why Masuzu started to use such clever language to deceive Hime these days. Perhaps this is just a plot to shake up Fuyuumi?

Hime pulled Fuyuumi’s hands, stared earnestly at her, and said:

"Please, Master."

"M-Maaaster?!"

Fuyuumi cried out loud.

Then she fiercely looked at me for help——— *Ahh, just don't ask me for that, when Hime becomes like that, no one can stop her.*

Caught in Hime's longing eyes and freed from Chiwa's suspicious glare, Fuyuumi crashed open with wild laughs.

"Fu! Fufufufufufu! Fufufufufufufu! Okay, let me *teach you*!"

"Wai— A-chan?! Stop it!"

Fuyuumi ignored Kaoru's warning and began to speak:

"L-Let's talk about the subject of our dates. I often wear a one piece white dress! He seems to like pure and cute clothes—— Boys really like girly clothes that feel 'a little exagerated'! That being said, wearing ribbons and such to dates is, on the other hand, 'too childish' and enough to be laughed at!"

Hime tugged on Fuyuumi's uniform:

"I learned a lot, can I ask you more?"

"Sure! What do you want to ask?"

"How long have you dated 'Michel'?"

"Uh, uh... For about t-two years? wait, No— And half a year? Wait, No--- Let's say roughly for about a year or so."

"How did you meet that college student?"

"When he was my middle school tutor… Wait, no— It was fate. When he confessed to me, I was very astonished, but at that time I was single."

"So you went out with someone even before that?"

"Looking back, Michel is my third one. All of them confessed to me! Actually, I'm even more popular than that Natsukawa Masuzu—!"

Hime was fascinated by Fuyuumi's big talk, and she kept whispering 'amazing, Master'. So… was this cool? I myself, as an anti-love, simply couldn't understand any of this.

Chiwa very unwilling bit her lower lip while being in silence. Faced with such specific details, there was nothing to say. It was unreasonable to call it 'provisional lies'.

The final outcome of this matter seemed to be an error in judgment by Masuzu.

"Right, Kaoru, are you okay? Sleepy?"

I looked to my side and noticed Kaoru’s 'head' down on the table.

"—Hey, Kaoru? What's wrong? Perhaps you're sleepy?"

Kaoru then slightly raised his head to answer me directly:

"...Ah, nothing."

"Is it because cram school classes are tiring?"

"Yes, it's that subject where we learn that 'girls are such troublesome creatures'. I thought that I had learned it already."

After Kaoru said such a profound but incomprehensible line, he sighed a long breath.

Then Hime firmly gripped Fuyuumi’s hand and said:

"From now on, let me call you 'Love Master'."

"Ahahahahahahahaha! Master or whatever is fine! Call me whatever you like!"

Fuyuumi’s laughter was so extreme that it caused the neighboring guests to look back. I wonder why, but at that time her face looked as if she was about to cry.

◆

Chiwa left with her parents, and Hime left after saying: 'I can feel the changes in a new 'wind'.' In the end only Kaoru, Fuyuumi, and I were left.

Fuyuumi, who seemed exhausted and distracted witless, was silently munching on baked onions. Kaoru and I were unable to start a conversation and so we ended our dinner after there was no decent dialogue.

"Then, Fuyuumi, Kaoru, see you tomorrow."

"Yeah... See you later."

"See you later, Eita, Aaah..."

Fuyuumi looked as if she were about to die and didn’t say a thing. I didn’t know why even Kaoru seemed to have no energy.

"Rest up, you two. Tomorrow some very difficult classes are still waiting for us."

When I said this and was about to leave, Fuyuumi's words stopped me.

"Hey, I want to ask you one thing."

I looked back and saw Fuyuumi’s intense look, and said:

"'She has a boyfriend', when Kidou-kun heard that, what did you think?"

"What do you mean?"

I couldn’t understand the meaning of her question, and tilted my head puzzled. Fuyuumi gave an 'aaah', sighed, and said:

"Sorry, nothing. You can forget about it."

"...?"

Accompanied by Kaoru, Fuyuumi hurriedly turned back.

#4: Believing in My Girlfriend is Mayhem

＃4 彼女を信じれば修羅場

After leaving the family restaurant and saying farewell to Fuyuumi and Kaoru, my cell phone began playing that cursed music just as if it knew it was the opportune moment.

[Subject] Wishing you a magnificent and peaceful summer

[Text] Dear Sir,

as it is the height of summer, I wish you increasingly well with good health.

Cicadas can be heard endlessly, and feeling the character of summer, I wonder if thy honored is doing well these days?

Come to the usual café.

Sincerely.

Just opening the text message made me gush out with fatigue.

To think that texts from my girlfriend could make me unhappy to this extent, it really was innovative…

If she tried applying for 'The Guinness Book of World Records', would she make it?

At that thought, the cursed music sounded again.

What is it? Did she forget to say something?

[Subject] Iiidiot!

[Text] Of course I wouldn’t make it on 'The Guinness Book of World Records', right?

"You're the idiot, you idiot!"

I couldn’t help but get angry at the text message.

The eyes of pedestrians passing by made me feel awkward…

But how could Masuzu know what I was thinking? Now, she couldn’t have supernatural powers, could she? But maybe Hime’s delusional new world wasn’t too far off.

I thought about these trivial things as I rushed to meet Masuzu who was waiting at the coffee shop. From here it would take eight minutes to walk, but if I ran it would take four minutes. I definitely won't let her go on and on being so picky about the time again.

I entered the café that was filled with couples earlier and found Masuzu sitting at the exact same seat as last night.

She noticed my figure, suddenly sighed and said:

"Today it's four minutes, 23.83 seconds. Well, it’s much faster than yesterday, but if you take the current situation, it will still be very difficult to qualify for the inter-highs[30]."

"Don’t— worry— I'm not— going to— participate."

I sat opposite of Masuzu, completely out of breath.

"If it was such a pressing matter, you didn’t have to send such a long text."

"Well I realized I haven’t sent a summer greeting to you yet[31].”

"Then you should have written a postcard! Don’t mix that up with regular texts! That kind of incomplete partial courtesy is the thing I dislike the most!"

Masuzu gave a 'hmph' and said with a childish pout:

"What courtesy? You are merely at a level where you get excited about Akishino-san’s butt."

"...How long do you intend to keep bringing that thing up?"

"Of course until your death."

Masuzu said, with her eyes looking like a wild wolf's.

"Desire • For• Butts[32]. That is the only real sense of justice that the two of us share."

"I don't recall sharing that kind of justice with you!"

"Fine, since I don't like thinking I'm particularly aroused by butts, unlike Eita."

"And you're immediately betraying what you said!"

These changes in the wind's speed are simply too astonishing. It's like if I was with this girl in the same army fighting together, by the next day she would unceremoniously sell me out to the enemy.

The waitress fearfully helped us as we ordered. She probably thought that we were 'a couple in the middle of an argument'. But we always had this kind of feeling around us, and furthermore we weren't even a couple.

"So how did the business with Fuyuumi Ai go?"

"Oh, I definitely have results."

I took a sip of lemonade that the waiter brought, and then looked Masuzu in the eyes and said:

"Fuyuumi really has a boyfriend, I'm sure."

"Why would you say that?"

"Because she told us things about Michel in great details. For example, what she wears to dates, her boyfriend's preferences, how they met each other, and that type of stuff."

"*That's* what you call evidence?"

Masuzu shrugged and said:

"I thought you were going to bring something like Daigoro's photo. Even then, there is the possibility that it's just someone else's photo, so it's difficult to call that evidence."

"Then, what would *you* believe?"

"If someone actually meets Daigoro in person."

Fed up with it, I said:

"If you start doubting to that extent, you'll never see the end of it, understood? Can’t you just believe in what I say a little."

"...That’s true, I'm sorry."

Masuzu stirred her rather dilute iced coffee and said:

"I’m just a woman who is unable to believe in anyone."

"Eh?"

What is this?

Suddenly the subject became too serious.

"Because I myself am a liar, I feel like other people will resort to lying as well. Completely involved in this lifestyle of falsehood, I have long lost trust in people's hearts."

Masuzu stared at a piece of ice floating in her glass as she spoke to me. At the same time, I saw a 'painful smile' overlap.

——*'I am demon.'*

"...H-How could that be possible, heh?"

I rubbed my nose again and again, and said:

"Even if you certainly are someone who is very distrustful, I definitely don't think that you are the type who is 'unable to believe in anyone'."

"Why are you saying something like that?"

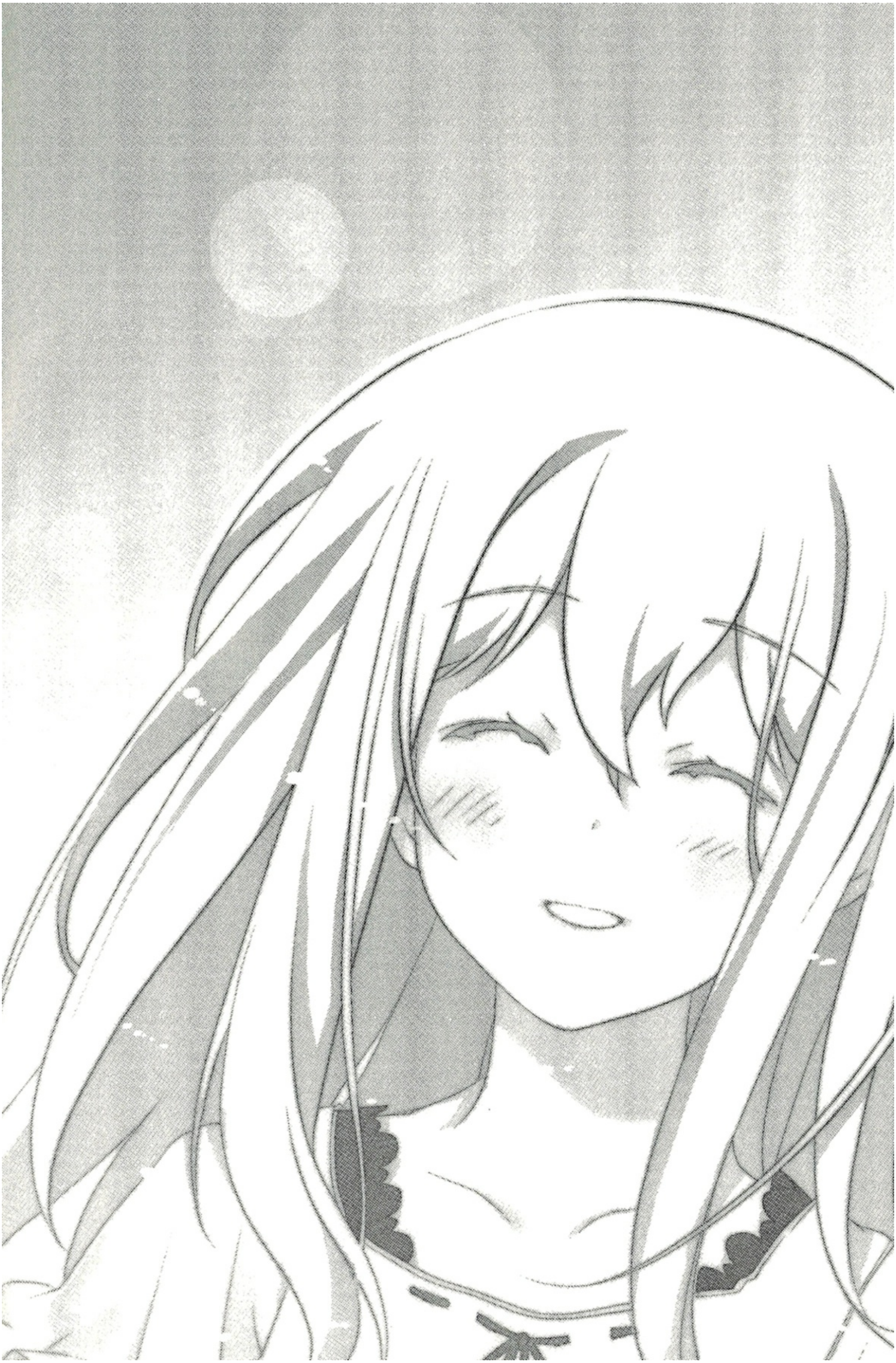
"Because if you really didn’t trust anyone, you wouldn't be able to do club activities with Chiwa and Hime. Every time you kept drawing up these meaningless plans to become popular, isn’t that proof itself that those two will follow through?"

Masuzu’s expression seemed to suddenly realize it.

"Perhaps, it might just be as Eita says."

"Since you have such a self confidence, the fact that you believe in yourself means that you are already capable of believing[33]."

I said, smiling at Masuzu. Masuzu gave me a big smile in return.



Eh, I can say some pretty nice things!

It had been a while since I felt like fitting the shoes needed for the 'boyfriend' label.

"Then I should be able to trust, too."

"That's what I think."

"Yes, for example, if my own boyfriend tries to steal underwear from bloomer stores every night, I will trust even such a difficult story—"

"DON'T BELIEVE THAT!"

I gave out a strong denial.

"Huh? But I have trust in my heart."

"This is something you made up! It’s based on a completely biased misconception! You absolutely can’t believe it!"

That being said, what is a bloomer store?!

I don’t even think that elementary schools even use those anymore!

…Are there really still schools like that?

Am I the only one who doesn’t know?

"This is Masuzu. This is Masuzu. Subject Kidou Eita’s passion for bloomers has begun to ignite. Over."

"Stop it! Who are you talking to anyways?!"

Even though it felt like I just won a bit, it ends up like this?

Is it impossible for me to win Masuzu over?

Isn't this like stepping on your own tail?

At this time.

Masuzu suddenly leaned forward and immediately placed her lips near my right cheek.

———*chu*

"———?!"

I clutched where Masuzu touched me on the cheek with the lips, and stared back at her.

Masuzu's cheeks seemed slightly flushed as she looked away and said:

"Take it as a reward for saying some nice things."

"[...]"

Damn!

How come?

This is nothing like her usual combat strategy!

Why, why is my heart pounding like this...?

I fell silent, and Masuzu once again brought her face close to me, and whispered:

"Are you excited?"

"H-H-How c—"

—*ould that be?* I couldn't finish the sentence.

I definitely am not a liar.

#5: Waiting to be Confessed to is Mayhem

Just under those feelings I was persuaded by Masuzu, and I couldn’t help but continue investigating Fuyuumi Ai.

"......So annoying......"

The weather was so hot it seemed to suck strength out of people, and being asked to do such a thing made me really depressed. Out of all the「boyfriends」of the world, were they driven so hard day and night for their girlfriends? If that was the case, then I would absolutely be anti-love.

Bearing this kind of lazy attitude, I finally finished the fourth day of summer cram school.

After the last class, the pair of childhood friends Kaoru & Fuyuumi immediately came to talk to me like yesterday. Fuyuumi was the same as always, restless and unable to calm down whenever she was in front of me. She couldn’t have gotten in a habit already?

"Eita, do you want to get a cup of tea today?"

"Sure, we can go wherever."

Thankfully, Kaoru invited me to go, so I didn’t have waste time approaching Fuyuumi.

Kaoru shouldn’t be arranging this because he knows my and Masuzu intentions?

"Are we going to the same café as yesterday?"

"Today I want to eat sweets, so lets go somewhere else. Right, A-chan?"

"Y-yeah......"

Fuyuumi unnaturally nodded, and Kaoru laughed almost mischievously.

"Sorry, sorry. A-chan just wants to be with Eita, so wherever we go is fine."

"Y-yea...... Hey! W-W-W-W-what are you saying, idiot?! Don’t say stupid things, idiot!"

Fuyuumi blushed, and slapped Kaoru’s back. These two had a really nice feeling with each other.

"S-So, I’ll go with you today too!"

Fuyuumi brushed back her long hair, and pointed her hand at me. I was already used to seeing this pose of hers.

We went to the shopping center in the opposite direction of the station, and walked into a snack shop.

"There’s a lot a desserts that have bananas in them here."

"Ah, desserts?"

I followed Kaoru, and sat on the inner seat. I looked around the store, and saw there were no male guests. That being said, with the extremely pink interior of the shop, a man would never step in.

However, Kaoru was not shy at all as he called the waitress and said,

"I want a jumbo banana ice cream parfait. Please add extra almonds, and replace the ice cubes with strawberries. For a drink I’d like a hot house blend coffee. What would Eita like?"

"I-I’ll have the same."

"Then A-chan?"

"The same will be fine."

"Then three of the same~!"

Kaoru shouted like a child, and held out three fingers. Even though the waitress sniggered, Kaoru did not care.

"Does Kaoru come to this store often?"

"Ah? Let’s say occasionally."

Kaoru tapped his feet and began to hum, ｢Is it here yet? Is it here yet~♪｣. Although I always knew he liked sweats, I had no idea he liked it that much.

After about ten minutes, the desserts we ordered arrived. Kaoru looked very happy, while I on the other hand felt somewhat uncomfortable eating the banana ice cream parfait—

"Fuyuumi you’re not eating the bananas?"

"Mhn."

After eating all the whipped cream and ice cream, Fuyuumi was left with only four pieces of banana on her plate.

"Why? You hate them?"

"I love them."

"......?"

What was with this?

Ordering a banana parfait and leaving the banana was exactly the same as ordering a pork bun and not eating the pork.

"Hey, Kaoru, can you help me finish this?"

"I guess I have no choice. It’d be a waste to leave it."

Kaoru smiled, and it definitely did not look like he had no choice. He ate the bananas in a flash. I didn’t expect he’d be able to finish that after eating a jumbo banana ice cream parfait. What happened to the Kaoru who normally eats small portions?

With this mystery unresolved, we finished the ice cream parfaits, and began to chat as we drank tea.

"Although this is changing the subject, which kindergarten did Eita go to?"

When Kaoru brought up the question, I didn’t know why Fuyuumi’s eyebrows twitched.

Not understanding anything, I answered,

"Wakaba kindergarten."

"During kindergarten, did you have any interesting memories?"

What was with Kaoru? He’s never asked things like that before.

"Oh, nothing worth mentioning......?"

I lost my voice.

Because sitting opposite of me, Fuyuumi’s look suddenly changed.

She was clutching a wet napkin, nearly leaning forward, and staring at me. Under that kind of glare, I think I finally understand why she was called demon disciplinary club member.

"W-what’s wrong, Fuyuumi?! D-did I do anything?"

"Nothing!"

It had to be something......

She was clenching her teeth and her eyes were bloodshot.

With cold sweat dripping down my back, I said,

"O-Oh right, the autumn trip where we dug for potatoes was really fun. When we dug those potatoes up, we roasted them on the spot and ate them. It was really delicious."

"............P-Potatoes............"

Fuyuumi hung her shoulder, very disappointed. What was with her? Did she hate potatoes? But yesterday she was happily eating the large fries.

Fuyuumi stiffly smiled, raised her head again and said,

"B-But, your memories can’t just only be about digging potatoes? You should have some other too?"

"Uh......"

I folded my arms and tried rummaging through my memories.

"Right, I remembered something about when I was in Star class."

"Eh, Star Class? W-W-What? C-can you say it in more detail?!"

"Once, when my grandparents who lived nearby organized this taro cook-out, they used this huge! Gigantic! Pot to cook! Eating piping hot taro on a cold day, it was really delicious!"

"You only have memories of potatoes?!" [34]

Fuyuumi slammed on the table and stood up, nearly causing the coffee cups to jump.

"Ah, I see. You love potatoes most, right? Nothing else is better than potatoes, right? If that's the case, we should order some more then!"

"S-stop! Don't keep pressing the call bell!" [35]

Fuyuumi shouted at the waitress who rushed over,

"Add another ten orders of large fries!"

"You eat that much?"

"It's for you to eat!"

We noisily argued, and Kaoru's「head」was soon lying flat on the table, just like yesterday in the family restaurant.

In a dying voice, he said,

"......Hey, Eita."

"What is it?"

"Tsundere VS. Slow-Witted is really the worst matchup, and I really regret taking this silly job."

I didn’t understand a word of what he said.

—In the end, this restaurant did not have large orders of fries on the menu (obviously), and I narrowly escaped a death from eating too many fries.

The reason for Fuyuumi’s anger was still something I didn’t understand.

Furthermore, the plan to figure out whether Michel actually existed came to nothing.

◆

"Eita-kun really is useless."

Masuzu said.

Masuzu was commenting (honorifics mode) on my hard work from yesterday.

Speaking of why she went back to using honorifics, it was because she listened to my previous request—of course not. In fact, it was because we were together with Chiwa and Hime.

It was Saturday afternoon.

We members of「Jien-Otsu」met on an open-air veranda of a café not far from the shop I visited with Kaoru and Fuyuumi yesterday.

Chiwa and I already spoke about it before lunchtime during cram school, so we decided to have a club reunion and fetched the other two.

"Masuzu, you can’t say that. I tried my best."

"Yeah, Natsukawa. There are few people who will waste their energy like Ei-kun, right?"

Hey Chiwa, why did you bring that up?

"Eita just hasn't become serious yet. In about 120 million years, he'll awaken and save the planet."

Hime, if I become serious after 120 million years, everyone will be dead.

"Anyways, this café is a pretty nice place."

In order to escape the criticism, I tried to change the subject.

Around us were very fashionable and spacious buildings covered with white ceilings, and here there were coffee tables that sat about thirty. The buildings around us had all set up display windows, and while drinking tea we could see the fashion stores and boutiques around us.

"Right. This store feels great!"

"Really? I feel rather nauseous from being attacked by「Fashion Germs」."

"......I feel really disturbed drinking tea outside."

Although Chiwa was very happy, it seemed like Masuzu and Hime did not rate this place very high.

"Why? In order to be popular, it's necessary to understand the trendiest shops, right?"

"Where did you learn that kind of thing?"

"In magazines, you see."

Chiwa took a youth fashion machine called「PACHI LEMON」from her bag. Ever since the start of high school, Chiwa has really loved reading this magaizine, and often liked to show me how「this magazine has become the ONIONLEADER for female high school students」! For a time, I didn't understand how this had anything to do with onions, but I later found it was actually called OPINIONLEADER; my childhood friend just couldn't read English.

The pages of the magazine ruffled as Masuzu flipped through it,

"I see. Everyone becomes frivolous and indecent because they're reading these kinds of things."

"Right—because all the popular girls read this."

"That’s really crazy, hey ♪"

- Shreedddddddddd!*

"Why are you tearing it!"

Chiwa shouted when she saw her「Pachi Lemon」so brutally torn.

Masuzu exhaled, and very happily wiped the sweat from her forehead.

"Ah, because I didn’t like it."

"That’s not a reason to tear apart other people’s books!"

"I actually had a very good reason. I didn’t like it so much, I nearly died ♪"

"Whatever the reason, I can’t forgive you. Pay me back damnn!!"

"I know—I'm sorry—"

When Masuzu apologized, you couldn’t even see the「reflect」part of「self-reflect」.[36] Then she turned to the passing waiter and ordered a「large meatball spaghetti」.

Heeyyyy.

Even though Chiwa was a carnivorous Chihuahua, if you tore apart the book she loved to read, how could you make her mood change for the better—?

"(Sound of sucking) How big are「large meatballs」? ♪"

Her mood got better!

......Well, I guess you could say that was the good thing about Chiwa.

Hime picked up the two pieces of「PACHI LEMON」, and began to read while repeatedly nodding her head.

"Chihuahua, where is the readers’ contribution box?"

"Ah, Himecchi is interested? You see, it’s on this page."

Hime stared intently at that page and said,

"There are no contributions from companions or lovers from past lives, why is that?"

Ah, Hime. I don’t think that would be published. After all, 「PACHI LEMON」 is not a supernatural magazine.

"I don’t know about that, but there are some magic charms—look here."

Chiwa pointed her readers to the magic page.

"Rumor has it that 「A-chan’s Super Victory」’s charms are really effective." [37]

"That penname is ridiculous."

My interest to read was raised slightly:

★ Secret ♪ A charm to make the boy you like to confess to you!

First, don’t eat your favorite foods for five days!

If you give them to your friends to eat, maybe it’ll be more effectiv

Second, at seven o’clock in the evening of the second day, watch your

「Let my wish come true, moo ~ nyaa ~ mee ~」.

Repeat it for thirty seconds (roughly around that is OK).

But if your sweetheart notices, you’re OUT!

[38]

"......Ah—"

Honest, this kind of content gave the impression, 「What the hell」?"

"It’s such a troublesome charm. Are there actually people who do it?"

"Agreed. If one chants a curse and does not harvest their lover’s blood as a catalyst, the results will be very poor."

"Hime...... please don’t do that kind of thing......"

Before you cast your curse, you’ll be handcuffed.

"Not at all! 「A-chan’s Super Victory」’s charms really work too! Because she scored the highest on 「PACHI LEMON」’s cute popularity test, she’s a really amazing person!"

Masuzu nodded her head and said,

"So if you say that, can Harusaki-san refrain from eating her favorite meat for five days? Maybe you’ll even get confessed to."

"Okay. Then I’ll start today!"

Chiwa answered enthusiastically, but then the waiter approached her from behind and said,

"Sorry for the wait, a large meatball spaghetti."

"Wow —♪ The meat is like a tennis ball!"

The magic ended.

Masuzu stared at Chiwa slurping and devouring the pasta, and said,

"But as the young maidens club, it’s unacceptable to not have received one or two confessions from boys."

"I thought confessions were something that came after becoming popular?"

Masuzu shrugged her shoulders after receiving the tsukkomi, and said,

"When you’re testing for university, do you intend to study several years until you make the 100% pass rate before you finally take the test?"

"No, but these are two different things."

"They’re the same. The battlefield will not wait for people to grow up. Even if one is not fully mature, one must actively seek popularity."

Ah, that was such a beautiful line.

And yet it made it seem like she had some sense…….

"About these confessions, is there anything in the notebook about it?"

Chiwa said, with her mouth stuffed with meat sauce.

"It’s not that there isn’t."

Masuzu looked serious, and took out the eighth grade notebook that contained my dark history. Did this girl even carry it with her during the summer?

......Did I really write something like that?

Although this is rather pitiful, I have never confessed to anyone before.

I’ve only had the experience of being confessed to once, and I mentioned it to Chiwa before. That was when I was in Star Class of Wakaba kindergarten.

But I didn’t write anything about kindergarten in my notebook......?

As I pondered this, Masuzu started reading.

July 10 Clear

"Summer is upon us, Hurricane ‘Me’ is approaching......"

Our eyes met again.

Today was four times. Yesterday was three times. Tomorrow is...... W

My fair angel, locked in this cage known as a classroom. Originally

I am a man with sinful (KARMA).

But there’s nothing I can do—because you’ve fallen for me already?

It’s bad, right?

"It’s really bad......"

It’s hot, right?

"It’s really hot......"

But I was a Holy Dragon Knight of Dawn (BURNING FIGHTING FIGHTER) de

This was no fate (DESTINY) an ordinary human can get involved in……

Before the Angel’s (her) love (LOVE) ignites, I must break up.

I must take advantage of her untainted white love before it turns to

I must take advantage before our bodies are burned with the crimson

But, alas.

But if she gives me a letter, I’ll guess I’ll take it—?

"Kill meeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee."

The fashionable outdoor café echoed with a man’s shout.

"Kill meeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee. You might as well kill meeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee."

The man tore off his shirt wildly to the side, and rolled about on the ground with his upper body bare on the stone floor.

He shouted, penetrating the white roof towards the summer sun.

"Kill me. Hey! Kill me! There’s no meaning if scum like me are alive—no meaningggggggggggg!"

The guests and employees gathered in the fashionable coffee shop, and they simply looked at the man as if it were a dirty thing.

And that dirty thing’s name was—Kidou Eita.

Just me.

It’s me.

It’s...... Me......

"Pleaseeeeeeeeeeeeeee kill meeeeeeeee...... kill this useless, scarred, and traumatized man now...... wuuahhhhh......"

I cried and begged, but my girlfriend, ex-girlfriend, and childhood friend completely ignored me.

"Hey, what happened afterwards? Was he confessed to by that「Angel locked in the cage」?"

"Well, he didn't write about what happened aftwards."

"Wha—? Isn't what happens after the confession the important part—?"

"Agreed. The love tragedy of the previous Holy Dragon Knight of Dawn, to the ex-girlfriend, is very deeply interesting."

Even Hime was saying it?

Well......

Since you all wanted to know, then I'll tell you!

◇

—It was a hot afternoon, just like today.

In order to「let that girl have an easier time confessing」, I kept wandering the grounds after school.

That girl—fair angel (her name was Tanaka Rie) was a student council committee member, so she had to had stay at school until student council ended.

There was a classmate conducting club activities, he couldn't help but ask me,"「You're in the go-home club, so why are you still here」?"

Chiwa also said to me on her way to the kendo dojo,"「You seem to be hungrily running about everywhere, just like a bear before hibernation」?" But I continued to impatiently wait for the confession to come.

Like this, I walked back and forth on the east floor near the second year classroom around seven times before I found her.

Fair-skinned angel.

In the twilight of the late setting sun, surrounded by an empty classroom, she stood alone.

—It couldn’t be that she was waiting for me?

While I peeked at her from behind the shadows, I wiped my sweaty hands on the pants of my uniform.

Finally.

Confession.

I was going to get a confession.

......Haha, I couldn’t stand it.

But as I felt very embarrassed and hesitated in front of the classroom—a handsome guy wearing a soccer uniform walked in from the other side.

I quickly hid behind the pillar in the corridor.

Probably because he forgot something in there, the guy walked into the classroom where Angel was.

—What, you unpleasant guy.

This angel was about to take off from her cage, so don’t pull on her legs.

Really, that why I say athletic guys are—

I swore rudely in my heart, but the dialogue in the classroom soon reached my ears.

"Shintani-kun, thank you for coming."

"No problem. What is it Tanaka?"

"Actually, I have something to tell you."

"Huh?"

"I have, always, always—liked the Shintani-kun!"

"Eh!"

....

Sfuuuuu~ ~ ~ ~

"I'm sorry. When I suddenly say such a thing, you must be embarrassed......"

"That's not true."

"Huh? What did you say?"

"I also, I also like you! I have always liked Tanaka!"

"Ah! This is like a dream!"

I seem to have unconsciously backed off.

My butt hit the fire door behind me, and the corridor resounded with a stupid「creaak」sound.

Obviously, the two people in the classroom noticed it.

"Hey, who's there?!"

He gave his brutal athletic yell.

If one was human in flesh and blood, one would immediately run secretly away.

However, having inherited the Holy Dragon Race's proud and noble blood, I was different.

"Yaaahahhhhhhhhhhh! I coming you bastardddddddddddddd!"

I used a rolling skill I learned from wrestling class, and rolled into the classroom!

Then I blew air with my fists, towards the opposite direction of what those two seemed to be scared of—

"Woooaaaahhahhahahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh! Burn with my dragon energy (DRAGONIC AURA)! Fate Dark Black Flame (FATE DARK BLACK FLAME)!"

I punched the blackboard!

"Bang!"

I punched!

"Bang bang bang!"

I puncheddddddddddddd!

"Bang — — — — —! It hurtssssssssssssssss!"

My fist was scraped.

"......Hufffffffffff!"

Then I finally stopped firing

Then I finally stopped firing「beams」[39], and I turned to face them two.

I endured the bursts of pain in my hand and I put my thumbs up,

"Rest assured, I've defeated the enemy!"

"............?"

"............?"

I'll never forget the look in their eyes.

The guy's eyes seemed to say,「What, can't this bastard see the situation」?

Angel's eyes seemed to say,「Such a disgusting and bothersome person should die. He ruined such a good atmosphere」.

I felt shame.

"......Well, that's all!"

After sticking my thumbs up again, I ran out of the classroom.

What happened after that, I don't remember.

My only surviving memory, is when I was on my bed blindly cursing the world.

Inexcusable......

I will not forgive this corrupt world!

Unforgivable, Angel!

No, it was Tanaka!

—Well, even if it was anger out of humiliation!

◇

And so the above memory ended.

......Damn, now that I think of it, I told it in very great detail. It makes me want to hang myself.

"Eita-kun, what were you being so noisy about? Are you acting abnormally because the weather is hot?"

Masuzu tilted her head, puzzled.

"You suddenly undressed. Is it really that hot?"

Chiwa had wide eyes as she picked up the shirt I threw off to the side.

Then Hime scurried up to me and hugged me gently,

"Eita, hold me?"

"Why do you suddenly want to hug?"

"Because Eita seems to be in pain."

"...........Hime————!"

I hugged Hime tightly.

Because we both had Chuunibyou, I always felt we shared some empathy.

No, it didn’t matter what was the excuse.

Right now, I just missed having a lover's skin......

"Ei-kun~? What are you doing in broad daylight?"

"Hahaha. Do you really get aroused by Akishino-san? Are you infatuated · with · butts?"

My girlfriend and childhood friend gave threatening sounds, and I’d probably have to bear with it later, but for the time being I’ll forget about it for now.

◆

After Sunday, it was the sixth day of summer cram school.

Today at the end of classes, I didn’t feel like going home, so I stayed in the study room.

I was planning on reviewing the previous class, and when I was staring at the thick class textbook—

"Fuyuumi......?"

I felt like I saw Fuyuumi Ai’s shadow flash by the doorway, and I tilted my head in doubt.

She should have gone home with Kaoru, so why would she be here?

As I thought about this, I wanted to continue studying, but I soon noticed Fuyuumi’s shadow on the windows. Fuyuumi was hiding behind the door, peeking from the side. It seemed like she didn’t notice that I saw her.

The time was exactly 7:00pm, and the outside was definitely very dark.

Maybe because the skies were still bright a few moments ago, I didn’t notice her shadow reflecting in the windows.

I originally wanted to call out to her, but seeing her serious and thoughtful expression, I decided not to bother.

It was just like—right. Her expression was like the time when Angel was about to confess to that guy.

Fuyuumi clasped her hands over her chest just like she was praying or worshiping, and she began to mumble something.

Her voice was too quiet, so I couldn’t hear her from my seat—but it sounded like some kind of curse. What was it? Was Fuyuumi actually like Hime with Chuunibyou? Did she intend to use a curse to kill me?

After about thirty seconds, the spell was over.

Fuyuumi looked relaxed as she stood up, and afterwards fled away.

"......What happened?"

I stretched my shoulders and muttered.

Chiwa, Masuzu, and Hime were definitely very eccentric.

But this rival disciplinary committee member was also considerably strange…….

#6: I Thought it was a Romantic Opportunity, but it ended up as Mayhem

#6 ラブチャンスかと思いきや修羅場

The seventh day of summer cram school.

While the three of us were eating lunch at the cram school cafeteria as usual, Kaoru took out an A4-sized flyer.

"It’s almost this time of the year."

The flyer did show bright, colorful pictures of fireworks.

Hane River Fireworks Festival - it was held every year on August, 1st.

"This flyer is quite well-made."

"I always wished for them not to give it so much publicity. Like this there’ll be a lot of nonlocal people visiting, and it’ll be hard to get a good seat."

I sipped on the tea which I had gotten from my thermos and said:

"Even though the fireworks are beautiful, the crowd is really troublesome, and the places near the riverbank will be unusually crowded."

"R-Right! Wouldn't it be perfect to have a secret place to watch the fireworks from—?"

I wonder why Fuyuumi's voice trembled when she said that.

A secret place...?

When I was little, the idea of finding a 'secret place' was like being in a dream, but by now I have pretty much forgotten about it.

Then Fuyuumi timidly said:

"Kidou-kun, are you going there with Natsukawa Masuzu after all?"

"It was brought up, but I refused."

"Then, Harusaki Chiwa?"

"It was brout up, but I refused."

"...It couldn’t be... Akishino Himeka?"

"If she brings it up, I’ll refuse."

At this moment something unexpected occurred.

With *clatter!* a chair hit the ground, simultaneously Fuyuumi stood up. She repeatedly shook her fists, which still held her chopsticks, as she said:

"Yaamoon~♪ That magic spell was a HUGE-SUC-CESS! Chance, chance~ Now it’s a romance opportunity! Ai-chan EPIC WIN—♪"

I looked up at Fuyuumi in a blank daze.

The reaction from everyone around us was just about the same. Everyone stared at Fuyuumi, completely dumbstruck. The rice balls that some people had been eating fell to the ground, while others, who had been filling water cups, let said cups overflow with fountains. Similar reactions kept coming. From behind Fuyuumi, Yamamoto-kun from the soccer club spurt pasta out his nose. That being said, I hadn't noticed he was here until now.

Among everyone, only Kaoru nodded his head as if saying 'that's right, that's right'.

Fuyuumi gave an 'ah?', when she realized what was going on, and then nonchalantly sat down on her chair. She cleared her throat and said:

"If Kidou-kun is really that happy about the fireworks festival, he's even more childish than expected!"

"...Uh..."

"That's no good. You need to mature a bit more, we're already high school students!"

"[...]"

It is not important. Just say that I'm a little kid, I let you.

"So? With whom are you going to the see fireworks festival? Eh? Will y-y-you please say it loud and clear?"

I didn't know why, but Fuyuumi took out a small hand mirror and began to fix her bangs as she asked this.

I honestly answered:

"Nah, this year I don't plan to go."

The mirror slipped out of Fuyuumi's hands and fell to the ground with clatter.

"W-Why? It's a rare fireworks festival! What other plans could you have then?"

"I intend to stay at the cram school and study in a self-study room."

"That's not having other plans! Why don't you go?!"

"Hmm— Well, I guess you could say that I don't *feel* like going this year…"

I didn’t want to go because I hated getting caught in episodes of mayhem. That kind of reason would've been just too embarrassing.

"Anyway, isn’t Fuyuumi going with her boyfriend this year?"

"Eh? Boyfriend? What’s that?"

Fuyuumi tilted her head, not understanding.

"'What', well, it's about Michel. The boyfriend you said was from Tokyo. Didn’t you say in the family restaurant that he would return in August?"

"...Ah, t-that! That Michel!"

Fuyuumi clapped her hands as if she had just remember.

"Are there any other Michels?"

"So annoying! Everyone forgets some tiny things once in a while."

"Forgetting your boyfriend's name is a pretty big thing."

This capricious girlfriend reminded me of a certain Masuzu-san.

"I-I definitely scheduled a date with Michel! But unluckily he’ll still be in Tokyo by August, 1st! So on the day of the fireworks festival, I’m *free!"*

"'Free', huh?"

"Not just *free*! I’m *super free*!"

"[...]"

What kind of conversation was this?

Whatever, it's kinda fun.

"Well, I’m also really looking forward to the fireworks festival."

Kaoru probably realized this conversation was not going to go anywhere, so he was trying to help saving it.

"Tomorrow's a day off, do you two have some time?"

"Huh? There’s no summer cram school tomorrow?"

I was quite shocked because it was clearly still a weekday.

"It seems like they’re inspecting the facilities, so we're having the day off. I remember that it was written on the schedule."

"Really?"

I didn’t even notice it myself.

"Well because it’s like that, I got these!"

Kaoru took out three tickets for an action movie that had just been released some days ago. Recently I heard Chiwa say that that film had pretty good ratings.

"How about it? Wanna go together tomorrow afternoon?"

"Well..."

Resting for half a day does sound pretty nice.

And if I pay attention to the subtitles, it might be helping my English.

"Okay? A-chan is going too?"

"Ah, um, of course I’ll go, but..."

Fuyuumi glanced at me from the side.

She must have been considering what her boyfriend would think. After all, if his girlfriend went to the movies with some other guy, he probably wouldn't be too happy.

But apart from me, Kaoru and Fuyuumi where childhood friends, so it probably wasn’t a big deal.

"Okay, let's go, the three of us together."

"Ah, Yeah! I’ll go! Let’s go together♪"

Fuyuumi’s expression had a beautiful smile.

If she always had this vibe, it could be fun to hang around with her more.

◆

—Afterwards I told the three girls what happened today at cram school and their reactions were as follows:

"Three people are going to the 'movies'? Hmph! So frivolous."

"Ei-kun is just too undisciplined!"

"...A Dragonic Disgrace..."

"It's just going to see a movie. Why are you complaining so much?"

The time was 8:00 P.M.

We were all called by Masuzu for an emergency meeting, so 'Jien-Otsu' once again met in the same open air café as last time. It seemed like Masuzu had come up with a 'plan to recover the shut-down club'. In either case, it couldn’t be a good thing... But if I didn’t go, the consequences would have been terrible.

Masuzu took a sip of black coffee and said:

"However, this might actually turn out to be a good thing."

"What’s a good thing?"

"In this case, we must take advantage of every opportunity that reveals itself."

We didn’t know what Masuzu was talking about, but she spread out a half sheet of paper that she had prepared at home and brought with her.

It read:

"Capture the Disciplinary Committee Member’s Weakness! Heartbeat? Heartbeat! Date battle!"

"What is this? It just sounds like the name of a boring TV show."

In the end your ways are the ones I *consider 'so frivolous'.*

"What? What do you mean? Date? Whose date?"

Chiwa’s eyes began to glow excitedly, as Masuzu began to explain:

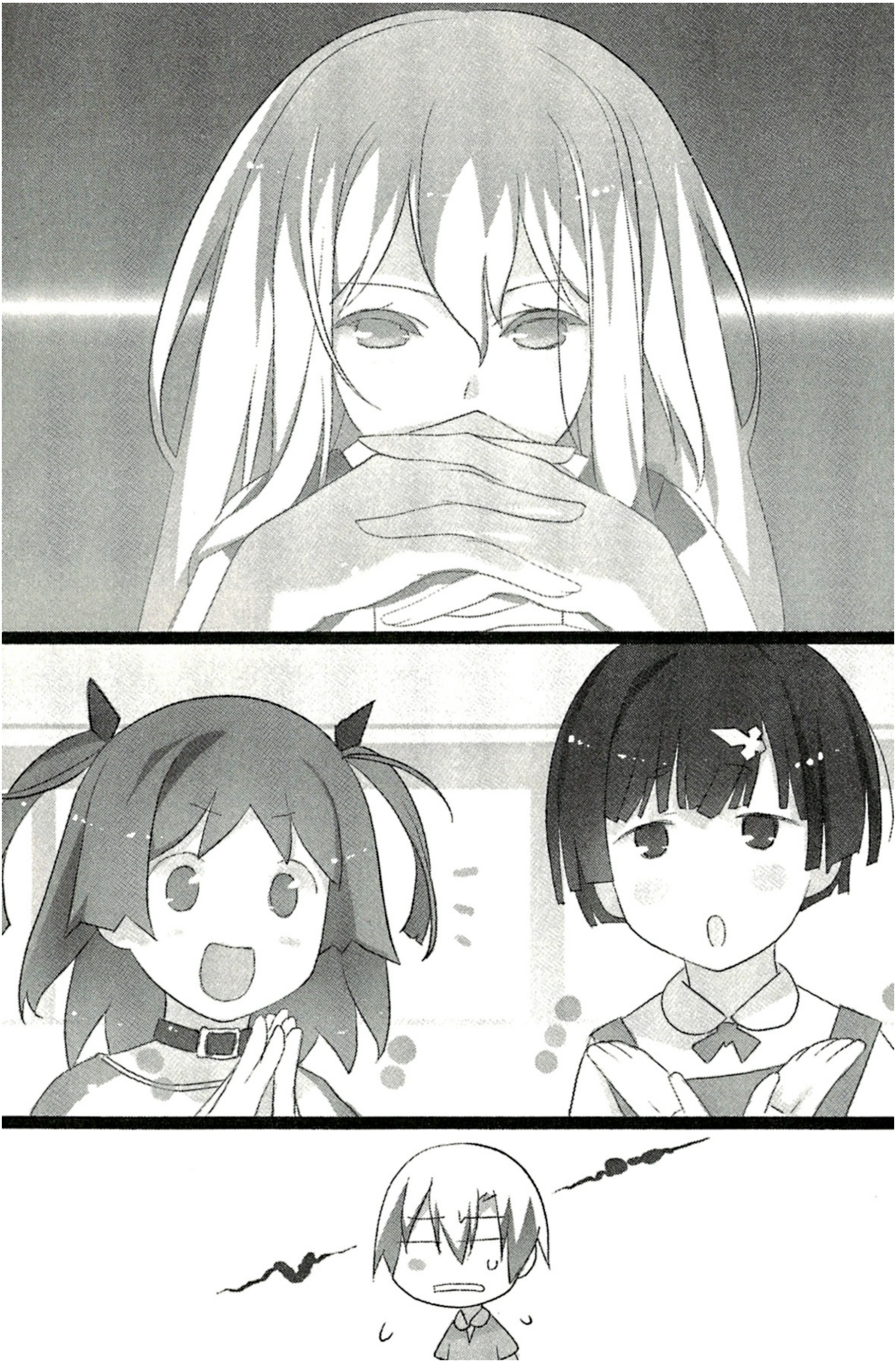
"So far, we’ve pursued to investigate Fuyuumi Ai’s weakness, but we couldn't get any satisfying results. Though this blunder was mostly caused by Eita-kun’s lack of competence, aggression and enthusiasm. However, I - as club president - am also at fault for not coming up with concrete plans, so I'm, like, one percent at fault."

"You dare say...!"

As my fist shook, Masuzu continued her speech before my eyes.

"It was there that I carefully thought about it. The demon disciplinary committee member’s— her lovestruck mentality can be completely exposed, and the best opportunity to exploit it— Isn't it a 'date'?!"

Chiwa and Hime applauded with 'whoo', so these two did have points where they could agree on. However, I certainly couldn't understand what there was to admire.



"In other words, it comes to *that*? We stalk Fuyuumi and Michel’s date and try to find some weaknesses?"

"Fufufufu, your thought process is too shallow, Eita-kun."

Masuzu 'tut-tut'ed with her tongue.

"The person on the date will be *you*."

"Huh?"

I wasn't the only one who let out such a surprised voice, Hime and Chiwa also did.

"Why? Why would Ei-kun... With that kind of person?!"

"Requesting clarification."

Masuzu coaxed the two with 'okay-okay' and said:

"Eita-kun and Fuyuumi Ai. Those two together are going on a date, and the girl will 'fall in love'. It’ll be the male version of our 'super popular' exploits, an episode of 'Society for Bringing Out Your Gentlemanly Self'."

"I see..."

The abbreviation would be 'Jien-Dono'.

...This abbreviation makes me want to cry. 'Jien-Otsu' feels much better.

"If Fuyuumi Ai has a boyfriend, this would be 'infidelity'. Thus, the debility we would take a hold of would be great."

"What if she doesn’t have a boyfriend?"

"At that time..."

Masuzu gave a fearless smile and said:

"At that time, the Fuyuumi Ai has simply been captivated by Eita-kun and will become our very own meat doll[40] that will obey our will...!"

"Meat doll!"

With her eyes wide open, Chiwa repeated the line like a parrot.

What an amazing battle plan.

Anyway, however one looks at it, it had to be impossible...

That Fuyumi, 'captivated by me'? Didn't I mishear it for 'beating me down completely'[41]?

"But isn't Kaoru also going tomorrow? There is no room for 'those two, together'."

"Don’t worry. Asoi-kun will be Harusaki-san’s responsibility."

"Eh, me?"

When the topic was suddenly mentioned, Chiwa gave out a strange cry.

"Harusaki-san, please go with Eita-kun to the meeting place for the date, and propose to make it a double date."

"I see! It’ll be a date like 'I with Ei-kun and Fuyuumi Ai with Kaoru-kun'!"

Chiwa even stood up and began to pant intensely, 'Fuui— Baaaa—!', but—

"No-No-No. Didn’t you hear what I just said? It will be 'Harusaki-san with Asoi-kun, Eita-kun with Fuyuumi Ai'."

After being immediately denied by Masuzu, Chiwa 'dejectedly' sat down. The fever was gone.

"Akishino-san and I will secretly follow you four. When Fuyuumi Ai exposes a decisive vulnerability— I’ll use this to take a picture."

Thus, Masuzu said as she took out her cell phone in camera mode.

"Understood? Akishino-san?"

But Hime still shook her head with a poker face and said:

"An unusual complexity."

"Are, why would that be?"

"Fuyuumi Ai is my Love Master. And Eita is my ex-boyfriend, so it’s a dilemma."

"It is indeed."

I sympathized with Hime because it was a very difficult dilemma— And this was coming from someone with experience (the present experience).

"If those two are going on a date... then I—"

"Then I?"

"Will destroy everything."

"WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO AT THE THEATER—?!"

I tsukkomi’d with all my strength. This girl’s talk had gradually become too extreme for me.

Hime looked at me apologetic and said:

"Eita, I’m joking."

"Then you should phrase it more like a joke!"

Anyway, why does it feel like she totally meant what she said?!

"Be as it may, I won’t participate."

"Well, I’m not cold-hearted enough to force you to betray your Master."

Masuzu very graciously agreed. So cunning. If it had been me, she would mercilessly force me to do it regardless of who I had to face.

"But Masuzu, you say Fuyuumi would fall in love with me, how specifically will we do that?"

"How could I possibly know about such a thing?"

'What in the hell is this paramecium[42] saying?' Masuzu's eyes conveyed such message as answer."

"Eita-kun is the advisor for the 'Jien-Otsu', so you should reveal your skills in front of us from time to time."

"That’s ridiculous!"

Originally, I planned to rest for half a day, but now the situation had become a big problem…

"Sigh, well— it might be too much if we don’t provide you with a little support, so I’ll give you this."

Masuzu handed me a small wireless headset, the type that could fit in one's ear.

"By using this, you can safely use your phone to talk to me completely unnoticed. I will give you some good advice."

"...*Your* advice in the end..."

It seems like the movie was going to become very unsettling.

◆

Later—

We separated due to Masuzu and Hime going in completely different directions. Thus, I walked home with Chiwa on the street at night.

"Excuse me, Ei-kun?"

"What is it?"

I replied absent-mindedly, wondering how I would survive the coming day.

Masuzu had made this incident very tiresome. Kaoru was the kind of person who would smile and agree, but Fuyuumi wasn’t that flexible. Furthermore she and Chiwa didn't really get along, so there was the possibility that a fight erupted before we could even see the movie.

"If you’re serious, I won’t forgive you."

"Yeah, yeah."

With regards to how Masuzu ordered me to try to make Fuyuumi fall in love with me, I could only agree superficially and pretend to obey. That being said, it was too difficult anyways. What amount of pheromones did one need to emit to captivate a girl after watching just a single movie?

"If. You. Are. Serious. I. Won’t. Forgive. you."

"Why have you been so persistent about that?!"

I was dragged back to reality from my thoughts, and I finally looked at Chiwa's face.

"If you’re serious, I won’t forgive you♪"

Chiwa smiled.

But within that smile, there it was 'something'.

To make an analogy, it was a smile like a giant hammer wrapped in a soft blanket.

Even though on the surface it looked very soft, the underlying shape was clearly a weapon!

"W-W-What are you talking about, Chiwa? I-It’s impossible for me to be serious!"

"That’s true—♪"

Chiwa hummed 'fum—fum♪' while she practiced sword exercises with a stick which she picked up from the roadside.

Maybe it was because the nearby rice paddy was so close, but the sound of insects was quite loud and it was quite difficult to hear voices clearly.

But in this environment, the sounds of Chiwa’s sword exercises were very clear.

Bum *SLASH*!

Bum *SLASH*SLASH*!

Bum *SLASH*SLASH*SLASH*!

"Errr, Um— Chihuahua-san?"

"Hei! What is it? Yah! Ei-kun? Taaa!"

I wanted to ask her why she was practicing her sword moves so energetically, but it seemed impossible for me to ask.

Then the sound of that cursed music came from my pocket. It was Masuzu’s text message.

I opened the phone to take a look at it—

[Subject] ゴ ゴゴ ゴ ゴゴ ゴ ゴゴ ゴ ゴゴ...

[Text] If you’re serious, You won't be forgiven.

"Masuzu, et tu...?"

Really! They are all the same!

Aren't there any decent girls around me?!

#7: Double Date in the Movie Theater is Mayhem

＃７　映画館Ｗ（ダブル）デートで修羅場

—Why are you going all out?

On the station square we agreed to meet on for the date.

When I first saw Fuyuumi, who was already waiting there, this was my first impression.

She wore casual clothes.

She had put on a cute pale pink camisole and denim shorts, plus a sleeveless lace dress on top. With slight changes in the light, the camisole occasionally became transparent, that somehow made me nervous. She was revealing her white shoulders that normally were hidden under her uniform. Somehow I didn't know where to look.

Why put up this kind of effort?

This obviously wasn’t a date. It was merely just some friends going to watch a movie.

"Y-You’re late. I already waited, like, five minutes!"

Fuyuumi pouted and turned her head to the side showing the usual 'tsun' attitude. It was good to see that on the inside she was still the same disciplinary committee member.

"Sorry, I was a little late with leaving the library."

"Oh, *really*?! It’s so great to know you’re putting your mind so much into studying! You study-idiot!"

After Fuyuumi had turned towards me, she suddenly lowered her head and shyly said:

"U-Um, Ki-Ki-Kidou-kun?"

"Y-Yes?"

Because she was that nervous, it somehow affected even me, strange.

"What do you think of my outfit? Does it look weird? Do I look like a bad student?"

"Bad student?"

What are you talking about? That white lace dress looks nothing like fashion sense bad student’s should have.

"Because you recently said, 'Wouldn’t it be better to wear normal clothes'..."

Oh, right. Now that I think of it, this was *something we chatted about at the family restaurant.*

"Hm, don't worry, don't worry. It's definitely not something a bad student would wear."

"R-Really...?"

"It's more of the opposite, I think it’s really cute and feminine."

It's been a while, but I noticed that Fuyuumi caught the attention of all the men on the plaza. If I arrived just a bit later, Fuyuumi probably would have incessantly been hit on.

Then—

"F-Fuyuumi, is something wrong?"

Fuyuumi suddenly blushed and even grabbed my hand tightly, then started waving it up and down!

"O-Outside!"

"Eh?"

"I’m, just a little, I’M GOING TO RUN OUTSIDE————!"

Why are you dragging me along as well?

"Calm down, Fuyuumi! We’re already outside!"

"No way?! Then, where am I supposed to run?"

"Don’t run! Kaoru is almost here, let's just wait here quietly!"

Probably due to my words, Fuyuumi stopped shaking my hand. Ah, she had almost dislocated my shoulder.

Fuyuumi lowered her head for a while and her shoulders rose and fell with a deep breath. Finally, she regained her composure.

"...You know..."

"What is it this time?"

"Don't you remember?"

"What?"

Fuyuumi clutched my hand, and her face grew increasingly red.

...So cute.

For some reason, her behavior had been really cute this day.

"Holding hands like this, something that already happened, don't you remember?"

"Huh?"

Just what time are we talking about?

There was no holding hands when we were at the family restaurant… nor when we were picking restaurants? Or when we were at the cafeteria?

I could feel Fuyuumi's hand continuously geting hotter, and while I rapidly tried to search through my memories—

"KOTEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE————[43]!"

A cry suddenly echoed through the square!

I instantly let go of Fuyuumi's hand.

And a few milliseconds after, the air where our hands had been at was slashed by a rapid movement.

Only one person in the world would do such a thing.

"Ahahahaha, Ei-kun, your dodging is as magnificent as ever— But next time I’ll aim for the chest, eh—?"

Harusaki Chiwa smiled widely and stood with her legs astride, even as she threatened to kill me. Naturally, her eyes weren't smiling *at all*.

"C-Chiwa, what a coincidence— Why are you here—?"

I suppressed my fear, and approached Chiwa as stipulated in Masuzu’s battle plan.

Step 1: Chiwa 'coincidently' appears at our meeting place for the date.

Step 2: 'I’ve always wanted to see that movie! Why don’t we go together since I just happen to have free time?'

Step 3: 'Sure, it’s better if there’s an even number of boys and girls.'

Step 4: Kaoru: 'If Eita really thinks so…', Fuyuumi: 'I guess it can't be helped.'

—Yeah, the plan originally was something like that, but—

"Why are you here, Harusaki Chiwa?! To wave around a shinai on the streets, you delinquent!"

"And what are you supposed to be doing here, Fuyuumi Ai?! You’re even holding hands with Ei-kun! Indecent! Indecent!"

Errrr—

For some reason, I keep getting this 'it's ruined' feeling?

"W-What’s indecent?! You actually dare to say that to a disciplinary committee member?! You of that Self-Performing Group have no right to say that to me!"

"You have nothing to do with the Disciplinary Committee during summer break! That being said, what are you wearing? Wasn't that outfit an advice from 'Pachi Lemon'?! Yay, a copy cat! A copy cat!"

"Wh-Wh-Who is copying what————?! Baka————! This is obviously an outfit that Ai-chan spent a lot of effort to come up with on her own————[44]!"

This isn't any better than child quarrel.

Because it was summer time, there were many families at the plaza. To kids passing by, these two must have looked like a nice show.

Please, someone stop them...

"Ah, sorry I'm late—— Hey, why is Chihuahua-chan here?"

When Kaoru appeared five minutes late, Chiwa and Fuyuumi were already pinching each other's faces.

Chiwa seemed to finally remember the battle plan, abruptly left Fuyuumi alone and forced an unnatural smile:

"Hey, uh, Kaoru-kun, hello! I heard you were going to the movies?"

"Yeah, we're going to see an action movie called 'Ashura Fight'."

"Great— I always wanted to see that movie— Hey, can I go with you?"

"Eeeeeh?"

Fuyuumi and Kaoru cried out almost simultaneously.

They were really surprised.

Well, it was nothing special that Fuyuumi, who was the complete opposite of Chiwa, acted like that. But even Kaoru who was supposed to have a good relationship with Chiwa reacted in the same way.

"A—Ah— but we only have three tickets—"

"Of course I’ll pay for the ticket myself."

"R-Right— Ah, you got me there…"

Kaoru scratched his head while looking at Chiwa and Fuyuumi’s faces.

Then—

"A-chan, can you come over here for a moment?"

"Huh? What for?"

"C'mon, it's just for a while."

Kaoru pulled strongly on Fuyuumi’s hand and took her a little further away. It seemed like he was whispering something to Fuyuumi carefully.

While I was guessing what he was saying, Chiwa pulled on my ear and said:

"E~i-ku~~n~~? Why were you holding Fuyuumi Ai’s hand?"

"Ouch, Ouch! There was no reason! It's just that this and that happened!"

"...If you get serious, 'I'll kill you'. I already said that, right?"

"No, you didn’t! At least the kill part! Still, I wasn’t even being serious! This was the battle plan!"

"Battle plan?"

"Masuzu’s battle plan for making Fuyuumi fall in love with me and seize her weaknesses!"

Even though what just happened had nothing to do with the battle plan, I just said it was the same thing.

Chiwa finally left go of my ear and said:

"But when I see Fuyuumi’s face, I don’t see it like that."

"Even if you tell me that, it bothers me too."

Fuyuumi’s expression was definitely unusual.

It felt like a very serious facial expression that carried a lot of weight, with a very profound air.

What did she want me to remember anyways?

—At this point.

'Can you hear me? Eita-kun, Harusaki-san?'

Masuzu’s voice came through the small earphone.

Chiwa and I had brought the mike and headset, and wired it in our sleeves, then brought it the sleeve to our mouth to speak:

"No problem, I can hear you."

"Same, I can hear you—"

"Good. From now on I will give comments this way… Furthermore, Harusaki-san, please do not make a sudden ruckus. The plan was nearly ruined by that little scene."

"Eh, you saw that? Where are you?"

"Behind you on the right side of the station, I’m sitting next to the fountain."

We looked in the direction that she described, and Masuzu dressed like a detective from a TV show waved slightly. Her conspicuous silver hair was hidden in a hat, and her blue eyes were covered by sunglasses.

At this time Kaoru brought Fuyuumi back, and Chiwa and I hurriedly cut off our communication.

"Sorry to keep you waiting— So, Chihuahua-chan is coming with us?"

"It’s okay? Sorry for showing up without being invited."

"We can go in pairs, so it's perfect when we think about it. How should we match up?"

Fuyuumi was inexplicably twitchy, and Kaoru pushed her back towards me.

"W-Why is Fuyuumi paired with Ei-kun?"

When Chiwa made the complaint, Masuzu’s voice immediately came through.

'What are you *saying*? This goes just like planned!'

"Well... I guess that’s true."

Chiwa reluctantly kept her mouth shut. Great, it seemed like she still had some bit of rationality left in her.

"Well let’s go then, Chihuahua-chan ♪"

Kaoru casually pulled on Chiwa’s arm and went off.

"Uuuu, Ei-kun, don’t stay so close to Fuyuumi."

Even though Chiwa looked back several times, she was still led away. Ah— Kaoru was so impressive. He could even keep that Chiwa in check.

"How about we go too, then?"

"I-It can't be helped. I guess I'll accompany you!"

"Oh, thanks."

Many people tend to start their sentences off with 'ah' or 'errr', but I only knew one person who said, 'It can't be helped', and that was Fuyuumi AI.

And I had become completely used to it.

◆

'Ashura Fight' was adapted from a bestselling novel of the same name and as well as an international film.

The male lead was a young businessman named Eiji (age 25). It was about a month after he was married to his childhood friend Tina (age 25).

However, when the former lover Amy (age 25), who was presumed to have died at sea a few years ago, appeared, their fates completely changed. Amy and Eiji had once vowed to marry each other, so Eiji’s heart was unsteadily torn between his two beloved women—

Reading the synopsis would make one think it was a romance film, but it was actually classified as 'action film'. Tina and Amy could use paranormal powers, and their fights could shake the earth and torrent the sea. Eiji could only clutch his head and worry. Not considering the budget for the CG and martial arts scenes, it seemed like it had hit a blockbuster record since it had been released last week.

In either case, the most interesting part of this film was—

"Eh, an open voice event?"

I couldn’t help but ask at the ticket office. Kaoru nodded with a smile on his face.

"It’s the same like when you attend a sports competition. It’s okay if you laugh, cry, or shout in the middle of the movie; I even heard there were people who cheered for some of the characters in the film."

"Such a ground-breaking approach."

This activity really undermined the idea of going to a movie like it had been until now.

"Of course, for people who want to watch a quiet movie, there’s another section for that type of screening too. But this is a rare opportunity, so let’s try this one."

"Ah! I wanna try! I wanna try this one! It looks so interesting!"

Chiwa’s eyes sparkled with excitement, probably because she was a sports-loving kind of person. This sort of activity seemed to go well with her.

"Well, I’m all right with it too... Fuyuumi?"

"I-I am fine with it too, with either ways!"

Fuyuumi shyly said while lowering her head like usually.

As to why she was so shy, it was probably due to the boys around us who were staring at her. There was even a couple of which the boy kept staring at Fuyuumi, causing his girlfriend to pinch his face. When Fuuyumi wore her uniform, she wasn't nearly as eye-catching, but her appeal when dressed up like this was clearly immense. If the people at school saw Fuyuumi as she was right now, she would probably be a worthy rival in 'popularity' to that Masuzu.

Incidentally, speaking of Masuzu, she was in the nearby concessions stand, wolfing down a large bucket of popcorn. She must have been venting and overeating, probably because she was surrounded by couples from all directions.

After the staff exchanged our pre-sale tickets with seat tickets, we entered the theater. We sat in the middle of about four hundred seats, from right to left facing the screen: Kaoru, Chiwa, Me, and Fuyuumi. Even though I didn't know where Masuzu's seat was, she was probably sitting somewhere she could see us.

Just when I was thinking this—

'Eita-kun, why are you just staring blankly? Engage Fuyuumi in conversation.'

—This small voice could be heard.

"What should I say?"

'Of course you should talk so that she gets hooked on you, wasn't that clear already?'

...T-T-Talk so that she gets hooked on...

'Make sure that Fuyuumi-san becomes captivated by you, and also neither say nor do anything *I* would consider cheating. Quite simple, isn't it?'

"THE DIFFICULTY IS WAY TOO HIGH——!"

I couldn't help but shout.

"What's wrong? The movie hasn't even started yet."

Fuyuumi couldn't help but ask from beside me with her head tilted in puzzlement.

"S-Sorry, ummm..."

I racked my brain to find something to talk about.

"What kinds of movies does Fuyuumi usually watch?"

"Ah— I rarely watch movies."

"I see—"

"[...]"

"[...]"

The talk that 'gets her hooked on me', thus concluded...

Without a moment of delay, Masuzu made contact:

'What are you *doing*? Are *these* the limits of your conversation abilities?'

"Even if you say that, I just can't think of anything to say!"

'In these situations, the topic you chat about doesn't have to relate to the movie. Any topic with any background is okay, so come up with something.'

If any topic is okay...

If that's the case, then there was *that*.

"Fuyuumi....."

"What?"

"Did you see yesterday's 'Magure Punishment Extreme'?"

「YOU ARE BRINGING *THAT* UP AGAIN———————————!?」

What a surprise, for Masuzu to play the part of the tsukkomi.

On the other hand, Fuyuumi nodded her head:

"Mh, I guess you could say I've seen it."

"Really?! Then you are someone who knows what I'm speaking off!"

If that’s the case, it’s time to charge!

"Yesterday, in that episode called 'nabe again', it focused on police protagonist Yasu-san's boss and section chief 'Manabe'. I think this episode was the best emotional drama in the entire second season. Even though Nabe-san is typically someone who's just harsh with his subordinates and really not that likable, this time he was completely different from usual. Normally, he pushes everything on Yasu-san so he can drink tea, but this time he personally set out to investigate a criminal who attacked a child in the streets. He even took the initiative to set up an ambush, the reason being 'my only daughter was killed in a traffic accident'. It was really interesting! It’s something really rare in this contemporary structure of drama, and it’s godly, I tell ya—! A godly drama!"

I finished in one breath, and ex'ed the cola I bought from the concessions stand.

Whuu— So happy! Just so happy!

I didn’t realize carbonic acid after talking about 'Maguke' could be this refreshing!

—Well, with regards to Fuyuumi’s reaction:

"Kidou-kun."

"Y-Yes?!"

"Nabe-san isn’t a section chief. He’s a *division chief*, right? Wasn’t he promoted at the end of the first season?"

"...Oh, right."

Fuyuumi softly added:

"I think that Nabe-san was portrayed as a pretty honorable person in the past. For example, in the third episode of the first season, when Yasu-san was locked in solitary confinement while he was searching for drugs, Nabe-san turned a blind eye and even shielded Yasu-san in the hallway."

"...I guess you could see it like that…"

"Also, it wasn’t the first time that the plot point about Nabe-san’s daughter appeared. 'Maguke' used to not be a weekly show, and when they still broadcasted the episodes on special occasions, they explained this plot point once. Maybe because many recent fans don’t know about the content from the specials, they re-explained it."

"A-Amazing! Fuyuumi is so well-informed! I’m really impressed!"

"Really? For a fan, this is common sense though."

"[...]"

"[...]"

The talk that gets her hooked on me thus concluded...

At this time, I could hear another one of Masuzu's messages:

'Yay, she beat you, she beat you—'

"Shut up! You are so freaking annoying————————!"

At this time the sound which informed the viewers that the movie was about to start echoed throughout the cinema.

"We’ll talk later, Masuzu."

I hurriedly turned off my phone. Even though shouting was allowed, it wasn’t good to have phone calls during the film.

After about five minutes of commercials and advertisement notices, the main feature began.

The movie started with a close-up shot— a close-up of a very scary zombie. Even though it was an action movie, this was a really confusing opening.

"KYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!"

In the audience the sound of four women screaming echoed, and their noise actually scared me. I see. This was the reason they allowed shouting.

Then Fuyuumi’s fingers touched my left hand.

I whispered:

"Are you afraid, Fuyuumi?"

"O-O-Of course not. Just this little bit..."

Even though she said that, she tightly gripped my left hand.

I felt it was a little embarrassing, but at this time another set of small fingers touched my right hand.

"Gyaaaaaaarghhhh—— That huuuuuuuuurts—"

Chiwa had clenched my hand with all her strength, and suiting a person from the Kendo club, she had an incredibly strong grip.

"Hey, you, Chiwa! what are you doing?!"

"I determined it was cheating! What's up with that, being all 'deredere'."

"I was not being 'all deredere'!"

Then Kaoru loudly issued a 'cough' and cleared his throat:

"Even though the event doesn’t prohibit chatting, you should probably still try to be more quiet."

Chiwa and I both hurriedly shut up, and nodded to those around us in apology. However, everyone was already looking forward to shout around, so they didn’t notice.

And just like this, the story continued to develop.

Precarious on the edge of life and death, Amy had returned from her accident. However, because her former boyfriend was stolen by Tina, she erupted in anger and the battle finally started.

"Get rid of her, Amy!"

Ai-chan shouted with her fist held high.

"What, Tina! this short woman isn’t your equal! Your looks, brains, and personality are all superior to her! Superior! Superior! The childhood friend is so pretentious, you should just beat her up!"

For her own part, Chiwa was also screeching at the top of her lungs:

"Do your best, Tina-chan! That Amy woman is the worst! She’s actually taking advantage of her position and tries to steal him! Don’t argue with her, just hit her already!"

It seemed like Fuyuumi was with Amy, and Chiwa with Tina. They both empathized with their respective characters.

The two of them began fighting in the center of a large city. Amy fired lasers and burned down buildings, while Tina’s beam sword cut open the earth. In between them, their beloved Eiji kept rushing about back and forth in panic. His behavior made the audience laugh.*

From the middle of the laughs, I could hear the taunting voice of *one* woman.

"How *miserable*, Eiji. Can you even call yourself a man? How come your ex-girlfriend’s butt excites you to that extent, you hideous pervert! Women’s toilet overdrive! You Doppyun serenade! Underhanded! Kidou Eita!"

"THAT LAST PART CLEARLY INVOLVED MY NAME! OI, COME, SHOW YOURSELF ALREADY!"

I turned away from the screen and shouted into the audience, but I couldn’t see a trace of Masuzu. Damn! Where was she hiding?

On the other hand, Chiwa and Fuyuumi's excitement was escalating.

"IT'S YOUR CHANCE, TINA-CHAN! THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO DEFEAT AMY! SHOW HER THAT THE BONDS OF CHILDHOOD FRIENDS ARE THE STRONGEST!"

"AMY WON'T LOSE! IF IT'S THE BONDS, YOU HAVE THEM TOO! WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THE DEPTH OF THE RELATIONSHIP, NOT THE LENGTH!"

"LENGTH OR DEPTH, OF COURSE THE CHILDHOOD FRIEND HAS IT ALL!"

"THAT'S JUST YOUR OWN CONCEIT!"

I felt the situation had developed very strangely.

Even though they were watching the screen… However, they obviously weren’t arguing about the characters *on* the screen.

"IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH CONCEIT! BECAUSE WE WERE ALWAYS TOGETHER AND ALWAYS LIVED TOGETHER EVERY DAY!"

"SO EVERY OTHER GIRL HAS TO STEP BACK?! TO GIVE UP LIKE THAT?!"

"HA! JUST WHAT *DO YOU* UNDERSTAND ABOUT CHILDHOOD FRIENDS?!"

"IT'S YOU WHO DOESN'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING!"

Fuyuumi’s tone suddenly changed.

I couldn’t help but turn around, and I saw Fuyuumi’s eyes slightly tearing up.

"HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND HOW A GIRL FEELS WHO WASN'T ALLOWED TO BECOME A CHILDHOOD FRIEND!"

Chiwa stared at Fuyuumi, stunned.

Kaoru also stared at Fuyuumi with a strange expression.

"Errr— What is it all of sudden?"

I asked Fuyuumi timidly, but she coarsely wiped her face with her arm.

And then she returned to her original unyielding expression:

"Right, there! Amy, give her the final blow!"

—Fuyuumi acted as if nothing had happened, and began to cheer again.

Chiwa stared at the side of Fuyuumi’s face for a while, and as the plot had moved on and the battle scene did end, she looked back at the screen; Kaoru did the same.

I also turned back to the movie screen— But I couldn’t remember what happened in the movie after that.

However, Fuyuumi’s words lingered in my ears, 'Wasn't allowed to become a childhood friend'.

◆

When this was all over.

After saying farewell to Fuyuumi and the rest, I met with Chiwa and Masuzu in the nearby café. I asked if she had any photographs that could be used as 'Fuyuumi’s weakness'—

"After thinking about it, it's forbidden to take pictures in movie theaters, right?"

"[...]"

"[...]"

With nothing to say in front of us, Masuzu knocked the side of her head and said:

"The episode of Masuzu-san epic fail[45], *tehe*♪"

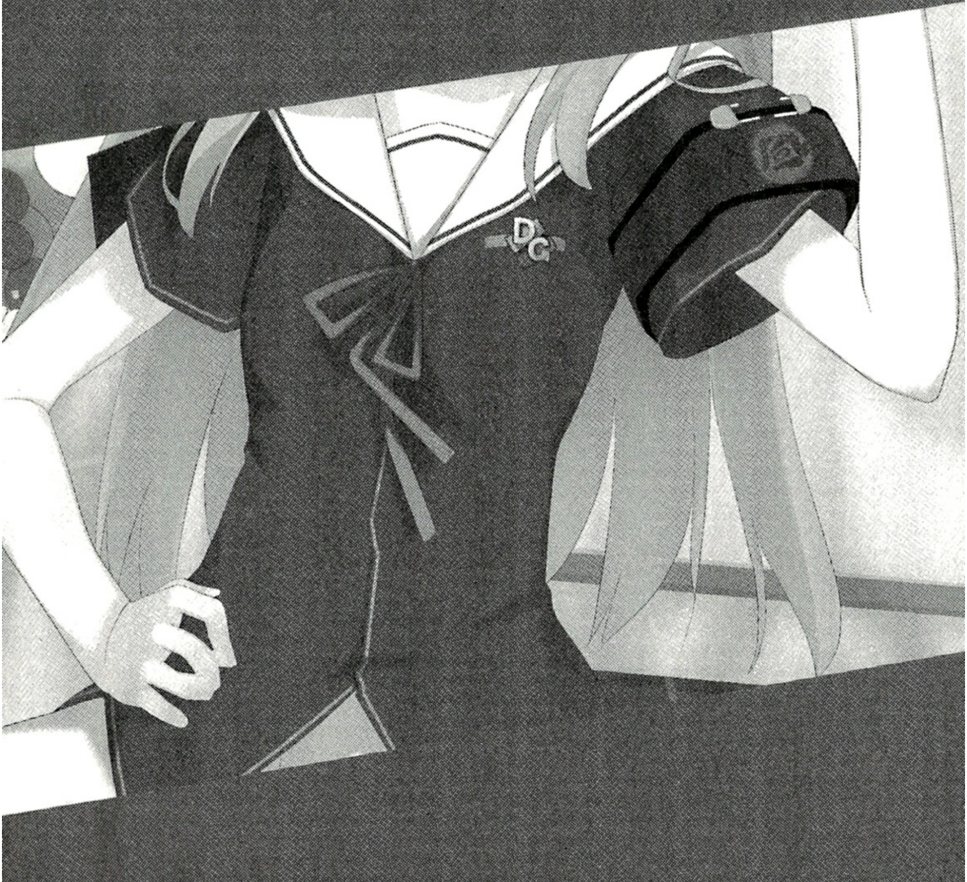
"ARE YOU MESSING WITH MEEEEEEE————?!"

Seize the Disciplinary Committee Member’s Weakness! Heartbeat? Heartbeat! Date Battle!

E•p•i•c • F•a•i•l!

#8: The Disciplinary Committee Member's Secret is Mayhem

#8 風紀委員のヒミツは修羅場



And with *that feeling*, the holidays were over. I returned to my daily life with my head buried in books again.

Ever since the failure at the movies, Masuzu had not been very active. I was afraid that she was planning out the next battle; but for the time being, there was peace.

Chiwa was the same, she stopped talking about Fuyuumi. Even Chiwa could probably guess the inside story, though it still looked like she wouldn't get along with her.

Hime was the complete opposite of those two, she kept urging me to 'let me see Master', 'I want to practice' and 'I want to become proficient in love'. Ah, I thought of finding an opportunity to see her in August, but probably Fuyuumi’s boyfriend (Michel) would be back by then.

And then, Fuyuumi—— as always we spoke occasionally at cram school. Even though the words she said at the movie always stuck in my thoughts, on the surface I still acted the same as before. We ate lunch together every date, and we frequently went with Kaoru to the restaurant or the coffee shop on the way home. The best parts were when we talked about studies, and I learned a few tricks about how to read modern literature. I really benefited from it.

But when we studied, Fuyuumi sometimes stared at me.

Just as if she were waiting for me to say something.

Because her expression was so obvious, I asked her many times, 'What's bothering you?' But she always answered, 'Nothing?', 'There is nothing wrong!' And then she would blush and hurriedly avert her eyes. Extremely cute. From all of our interactions, I began to grasp her good points.

—If it were myself from middle school, I probably would have misunderstood her.

'Could she possibly be in love with me?', or something like that.

But after having lived through that painful experience described in the 'Eighth Grade Notebook', I would never be mistaken again.

And that being said, she *had* a boyfriend — Murata - Michel - Daigoro. Sometimes I asked her, 'Have you been in contact with your boyfriend lately?', and Fuyuumi would act lovestruck when shyly replying, 'O-O-Of course?'. Maybe it was embarrassing for her— even though Kaoru would sigh each time, it probably meant he cared a lot.

Sometimes I thought that if we explained the situation to Fuyuumi and asked her for 'evidence of her boyfriend' to show to Masuzu, maybe this would make things progress faster.

It was too bad that 'Jien-Otsu' was bound to be shut down, but there were always other alternatives. Like Masuzu once said, even if we didn’t have activities as a club, it was fine if we just hung out together.

And on one leisurely day just like this—

"Eh? What is that?"

After the end of classes, I was still studying in a self-study room when I noticed there was a notebook in the drawer of the table next to me. It seemed like someone had forgotten it.

It was the same kind of notebook which I had used.

It was a B5-sized and every stationary store sold it, so it was pretty ordinary. However, even the worn condition of the cover seemed very similar, and there was neither a name nor a title written on it. If this was placed side by side with my own notebook, it would probably be able difficult to tell mine apart from this one.

I reached out, intending to bring the lost notebook to the administration office, but I accidentally tipped over my table. As a result, my pencil case and notebook both fell onto the floor.

The studying students around me all stared at me, and in my anxiety, I accidentally knocked down the tables around me.

While I bowed my head, apologized, and propped up the tables, I hurriedly cleaned up the things scattered on the floor.

Then I noticed it.

———*I messed up.*

I put the lost item together with my own notebook.

So troublesome…

Now I've got no choice but to look at the contents to confirm which is which.

...But it should be okay. It was impossible to leave a notebook unrelated to schoolwork in the study hall, so this isn't some kind of privacy invasion.

I picked up the notebook, and casually flipped it open.

Just one look at the handwriting, and I immediately knew it wasn't mine after all—

I totally lub Kidou Eita-kun————!

"Aaaahhhhhhhh?!"

I couldn't help but crying out loud.

This time, the eyes of everyone around me bore down on me with killing intent. I quickly closed the notebook.

—W-What was with this?

Why would they write my name?

And the 'totally lub'!

I put the notebook into by bag, and hurriedly left the study hall.

In the corner of the lobby, I sat down on a sofa. I took a deep breath to calm down my pounding heart, and re-opened the notebook.

It was clearly the large round handwriting of a girl, written like this:

Today I with Ta-kun, spoke about a ton~ton of stuff ♪

Unya Unya Unyaaan ♪

Ehehehehe… What should I do, what should I do~ w

Did I speak in a good way?

Did my face maybe get red?

He didn't think that I was a strange girl, right? (Sob)

This summer, I need to make use of that chance!

Because that promised day is almost here ♪

When I saw this, I couldn't bear it and closed the notebook.

W-What is this?

Last time it was my name. This time it is 'Ta-kun'.

Then it looks like this diary's owner has an unrequited love for this so called 'Ta-kun'.

Then that bit from before about liking me, what was that about?

"[...]"

That being said, whose notebook is this?

I'm very concerned!

Since I got to this point, how can I not *confirm who the owner is so that I can give it back!*

I put my hand on my chest, and after taking three big breaths, I opened the notebook again.

'This can’t be… SHIT[46]?'

Lyricist / AI ❤ FUYUUMI

Recently I’ve felt he’s very cold.

Perhaps, when he realized that I was talking with the other boys; then he turned cold.

Could this be… SHIT?

Could he be doing this for my sake… SHIT?

TONIGHT[47]! If I ask him.

MIDNIGHT[48]! He will answer like this.

'Because... ***you*** **are just too cute!'**

Yan ♪ Yan ♪ Yan ♪

Those guys, perhaps in reality, SHIT ❤

Maybe, it's my fault after all.

It's because I'm way too PRETTY[49], so it's my fault ❤ '

Tonight, together we'll RUN AWAY ♪

Tonight, together we'll RUN AWAY♪

"IS THIS A POEM?!"

I tsukkomi'd at the notebook with all my strength.

It was the same with Masuzu's text message, along with that poem. Recently, I've been tsukkomi'ing other people's writings.

No matter how I look at it, it is definitely a poem. It is the same as the many delusional poems I've written in my Eighth Grade Notebook. It is hard to imagine there was someone in this world who could seriously say, 'Because… you are just too cute!' If this were to be 'reality', then I might as well become an inhabitant of the 'delusional world'.

Having said that, this poem is terrible.

The word choice was extraordinarily sappy, the usage of English is just too strange. Even though 'SHIT' was written there, perhaps it was meant to be 'shitto', after all if we do assume that it is 'shit', then the literal translation is 'unchi', wouldn't that sound pretty bad[50]*?*

No.

Most important was a piece of information one couldn't have missed.

The author of this column had the name of 'AI ◆ FUYUUMI'.

In other words, 冬海愛衣.

To put in yet another way, it was her.

"...This *has* to be a lie, right?"

I got goosebumps all over and started to sweat terribly.

H-How can that stiff, reserved, and serious Fuyuumi, write a notebook like this*?*

No— No—, waitwaitwait.

This must be something from Fuyuumi's past that she wants to forget.

In simple terms, it is the same as my Chuuni notes. It's a notebook that seals a dark history of her middle school era.

Then I found the date on the top right corner of the page.

July, Xth 201X ❤

"WASN'T THAT YESTERDAY?!"

Ultra recent! What should I do?!

My image of 'Fuyuumi Ai' is crumbling! The Disciplinary Committee Member! Top three in the grade!

"...F-First, I should calm down."

For the time being, I took a deep breath, and collected my thoughts.

Basically, Fuyuumi is the same type of delusional person that I was in middle school. A poet, and additionally— she likes me*?*

No, she likes 'Ta-kun'?

Anyway, where did that Michel go?!

"What should I do...?"

How should I deal with this reality?

The best way would be to act as if nothing happened.

Just forget about all the contents of the notebook, and then put it back in the study room. That would be for the best. Even though I don't know how I'll act when I see Fuyuumi tomorrow, but if all I can do is smile and face her...

Right! That should be fine!

I don't know about this notebook, and I've never seen it. I don't know anything, I've never seen it. Don't know. Never saw—

"———— D i d • y o u • s e e?"

I was sitting on the sofa I jumped about twenty centimeters high.

This was the first time I’ve ever experienced that a human being could jump so high from a sitting position.

This was also the first time I’ve ever seen a human being so scared that they weren’t even able to scream.

It was Fuyuumi Ai.

She had been standing in the entrance of the main hall.

I saw her shoulders rising up and down, as if she were breathless. She must have been running all the way here. It was as if she remembered that she forgot something in the classroom. Something that if someone else saw it, it would be fatal, so she ran back at full speed.

Right away I shouted:

"It wasn’t me——!"

I didn’t even know what it was, but 'it wasn’t me'. Metaphorically speaking, this was an excuse similar to the usual line a criminal would say when he had been caught red-handed while peeking, even so I couldn’t help but to shout it out!

"Did you look? Did you see it?"

"It wasn’t me!"

"The notebook is wide open! Weren’t you looking?!"

"Itwasn’tmeitwasn’tme, IT WASN'T ME!"

In the middle of this seemingly forever lasting fruitless debate, Fuyuumi rushed forward. I reflexively held the notebook away! I jumped up and ran madly, and it seemed like the floor of the lobby was about to crack open. I ran from the side opposite of the entrance into the hallway.

"That’s my younger brotheeeeeeeeer’s!"

Fuyuumi urgently cried from behind me!

"That notebook is my younger brotheeeeeeeer’s!"

"Y-YOU LIAAAAAR!"

How could a little brother write notes with such sappy maidenly contents? That being said, if he said, 'I totally lub Eita-kun————!', then he would clearly be gay!

I weaved past the students gathered in front of the vending machines, and ran outside as the security guarded scolded, 'Don’t run in the hallways!' Even though it was already six o’clock, the weather was still sweltering hot and the terrible sun showed no mercy. The strength in my body soon depleted.

I ran past the sidewalk, through the bushes, and finally into a children’s playground— only then she caught up to me.

"UWAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!"

"KYAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!"

Fuyuumi pounced and hugged me from behind like a torpedo, and our bodies rolled on the ground together while swirling up dust.

What should I do?! I’m about to get killed!

I couldn’t help but be painfully aware of my imminent death— But Fuyuumi only hugged my body without doing anything.

Even more than that, she was motionless.

"A-Are you okay? Did you hit anything?"

I anxiously shook Fuyuumi’s shoulder.

Then—

"...Kill... me..."

"Huh?"

"Kill meeeeeeeee!"

When Fuyuumi finished hollering, she proceeded to kick, flail, and cry bitterly on the ground, just like a child.

"Kill meeeeee, just kill meeeeeeee! Delusional idiots like me should just die! Kill me, kill meeeeee!"

"[...]"

Somehow recently there was this guy who said exactly those same lines…

Feeling sympathetic, I said:

"H-Hey, Fuyuumi, calm down first."

"But you saw it. You read my disgraceful notebook, right? You saw that notebook that was full of delusions and poetry! So you should just laugh at me! That Fuyuumi Ai, who wields so much authority in the school disciplinary committee, in reality she has these elementary school delusions, it's hilarious, right?! If you laugh, wouldn't that be fine? Just laugh as you please…!"

Fuyuumi's eyes were overflowing with huge tears.

She knelt on the ground, completely motionless, and began to sob with her hands covering her face.

"...Fuyuumi..."

I deeply regretted reading her notebook.

Either way, I should never have looked in the first place.

How could I peek at other people's secrets just to satisfy my own curiosity?

Haven't I forced the worst kind of pain on her?

"I’m..."

I was about to say, 'I'm sorry', but I gave up on the thought.

If I apologized, it would only hurt Fuyuumi further.

What was needed right now weren’t those words.

Because those kinds of words—

"...I won’t laugh."

I concentrated my voice in my stomach and spoke as confidently as possible:

"Even if I’m going to be killed, I won’t laugh——!"

Fuyuumi looked up with her swollen eyes.

"I will never laugh at other people’s delusions!"

"W-Why?"

"Because I’m the same... look."

I sucked in air, and gave off a 'wuuaahhhh' scream.

Then I clenched my right fist and hissed:

"Awakeeeeeeen, Holy Dragon Clan's hidden power! Burn up the parallel univeeeeeeeerse! Fate's Dark Black Flame!"

Fuyuumi’s eyes turned to small dots, and I repeatedly punched towards the sky in front of her!

"DEKUSH! DEKUSH DEKUSH DEKUUSSHUU!"

Wuaaaaaaah.

So *embarrassing!*

Even if I did something similar to help Chiwa in June.

But doing this in front a person I spent summer cram school with, there is so much shame - it's indescribable. Especially since we always talked about serious topics like quadratic functions and English syntax.

When Fuyuumi got to know her notebook has been seen, this must have been how she felt.

Just thinking about it, this here is nothing—

Then Fuyuumi suddenly gave a 'pfu'. She laughed.

"Hahahahahahahahaha, fu, fufufu, FUFU, AHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!"

"[...] [...]"

Did she really have to laugh that much?

"Haha, hahahaha! What is this?! DARK BLACK FLAME? The flame is even black? And that 'DEKUSH' sound effect, you're even making them with your mouth! Since it's the sound effect of that special secret attack, you have to use your own mouth, pfu hihihihi!"

Fuyuumi's tears had become tears from 'laughing too hard'!

"Y-You're the same, right? I just wanted to tell you that everyone has delusions. It's nothing strange."

"Idi—ot! Of course delusions are embarrassing! What's with trying to act cool now, because it doesn't work for you at all!"

"Y-You! Fuyuumi!"

I angrily grabbed Fuyuumi's shoulder.

I thought she would resist, but I didn’t expect Fuyuumi to fall into my chest.

"...Thank you."

Fuyuumi whispered.

The scent of her shampoo, completely unlike Masuzu's, Chiwa's, and Hime’s, filled my nose.

"Hey, about that delusion."

"H-Huh?"

My voice unconsciously cracked. Wah! My heart couldn’t stop jumping, it was like Masuzu often made it, but I should've been used to it by now.

"Was that the same thing you hollered when you helped Harusaki Chiwa that time?"

"Eh?! How did you know?"

"I heard about it from Kaoru. I heard you shouted something in order to save your childhood friend."

I see, I told Kaoru about that before.

"Well, I just stirred up some trouble to get rid of the gangster who was picking on Chiwa."

"Well, you did the same thing that you did for Harusaki Chiwa, so you were willing to do it for me too—"

Fuyuumi firmly buried her face in my chest.

"F-Fuyuumi?"

"Don’t say anything."

"...Even if you say that..."

"Just don't look at it. The face I have right now..."

What did she mean by that?

Masuzu’s actions were always full of mystery, but this girl’s behavior was just as hard to understand.

Fuyuumi and me stayed in this position for a while.

To other people we must have looked like a couple holding each other. A lady who passed through the park on her way home from shopping smiled at us. It really made me angry, damn! As an 'anti-love', this was just shameful.

After a while, Fuyuumi finally raised up her face.

Her cheeks were cherry-colored, and her pupils were slightly moistened. She did look cuter than usual, and it made my heart beat faster.

"Kidou-kun, how much of that notebook did you see?"

"How much, you ask...?"

"By the time I found you, did you only manage to look at that poem?"

"...Yes, just that one."

"Really? I see."

Fuyuumi seemed relieved, but she looked somewhat disappointed. I felt she had a very complex expression when she nodded.

It would probably be better if I didn’t say I saw, 'I totally lub Eita-kun————!'.

Even if Fuyuumi really liked me, I knew she originally didn’t want me to find it out this way. Also, I didn't know how this was related to the 'Ta-kun' in the diary, so I thought it was probably for the better if I remained silent for now.

...Hm?

Ta-kun.

Why do I feel like that name sounds so nostalgic...?

"—Hey, what’s wrong, Kidou-kun?"

I suddenly came back to myself and found Fuyuumi looking up to my face.

"A-Ah, sorry. I was thinking about something."

"Mhm... Right, it’s about time you return my notebook. How long do you intend to hold onto it?"

I then realized that I was still holding onto Fuyuumi’s notebook.

"S-Sorry!"

Fuyuumi took the notebook from me and with a big sigh said:

"Sigh— The cover is a mess now, since you clenched it so hard when you ran away."

"I-I’m sorry. I really am..."

The notebook was definitely wet from sweat, and quite wrinkled. The condition was quite bad. There was no way I could just make up for it.

"Really? Do you *really* feel sorry?"

"Yes. Let me pay for a new notebook."

"Eh— *That* is all?"

"A-Also, I’ll invite you to lunch every day! If that’s not enough, I’ll add a large order of fries from the family restaurant!"

"You can forget about the potatoes... However, there is *something*."

Fuyuumi smiled 'fufun', and pointed at me in her usual posture and made a 'snap'.

"If it's like that, would you listen to the request I have?"

#9: The Remembered Promise is Mayhem

#9 よみがえる約束は修羅場

誰だって子供の頃に教わる。
何度も繰り返し言い聞かせられる。

「約束は守らなきゃいけません」

裏を返せば「約束を守るのは難しい」ってことなんだろう。
だって、人は変わるから。
約束をした自分と、約束を果たす自分は、別人だから。

だから人は、声を掛け合う。

「忘れないで」「思い出して」

――約束は、過去と未来をつなぐ鍵。

August 1st, Sunday.

Fuyuumi arranged for us to meet at the Hane High athletic grounds.

I checked my watch and the time was 6:30 P.M.. Because daylight hours were longer in the summer, the sky was still bright. Club activities had ended long ago, so the athletic fields were empty.

—Why would that Fuyuumi want for us to meet at a time like this?

After that incident, Fuyuumi never told me where we are going. She merely just pointed out a place for us to meet up at. What is she after? Anyway, is it okay to wear casual clothes? If we are going to enter the school building, it would have been better to wear the uniform.

When I was thinking about this, someone called out to me from behind.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, Kidou-kun."

"Aah, I didn’t wait very—?"

My mouth wide open, I couldn't help but staring at Fuyuumi.

Because she was wearing a yukata.

Fuyuumi Ai was wearing a colorful, bright yukata, with her hair done differently she furthermore gave off that 'not the usual Fuyuumi Ai' feeling. She seemed to be a little embarrassed as she stood there.

Even though the casual clothes she wore a few days ago had been very cute.

This yukata was simply something that belongs to an entirely different world.

'Burning the image in my eyes', or something, I wonder if that is what people say to something like this...

"W-Why are you wearing a yukata...?"

"What do you mean? This is pretty normal, right? Because we’re going to the fireworks festival."

I could not help but exclaim, 'Huh?'.

"We’re going to the fireworks festival?"

"That's right?"

Fuyuumi was the same with her usual expression that seemed to ask, 'What? You didn’t know?'.

"But, you didn't said so in the first place. And if we are going to the fireworks festival, shouldn’t we have just met at the Hane River Bridge, or the municipal park?"

It was quite a considerable distance to go from the school to the location of the fireworks festival. It would've been relatively closer if we had left directly from my house.

Fuyuumi nodded lonely, and said, 'Yeah', when she heard me.

"So, you even forgot about this stuff."

"...?"

What's that supposed to mean?

I was at a loss when Fuyuumi smiled and said:

"Come on. Let’s go."

When Fuyuumi made her first step the Geta[51] clattered with a very lovely sound, and I followed behind her without understanding anything.

"Hey, you’re going the wrong way, right? This isn’t the way to the riverbank. We’re heading towards the mountains."

"Enough already! Just don’t make a fuss and follow me."

Even though she still spoke with her usual annoyed tone, the atmosphere was completely different.

Because Fuyuumi was smiling.

Even though I spent the entire summer with her at cram school, I almost never saw her smile. But today she was smiling all over the place.

It was unimaginable to think that the girl who had yelled and chased after me not too long ago, the girl who cried and sobbed in the park, was the same girl as the one in front of me now.

"Hmm..."

I had learned it yet again.

Girls just were mysterious living beings.

We walked in the residential area for about ten minutes, then we arrived at a quiet rural road between rice fields. I remembered that I once came to this neighborhood to catch fireflies with Chiwa's family, but that had been something way back in elementary school.

"Ah, this neighborhood doesn't have fireflies anymore."

"There's less and less rice paddies here too. If you look at the foothills over there, there weren't any houses there ten years ago."

"Certainly."

I looked at the place where Fuyuumi's fingers pointed and nodded, and there definitely weren't houses back then—

Errr?

"What is it?"

Fuyuumi stared at me blankly, as I had stopped in my tracks.

I looked around and said:

"Could it be that this road is a shortcut which leads to Ipponsugi Hill?"

Yes. It certainly was.

This place was very familiar. When I had been in kindergarten, I used to play in this neighborhood a lot. Even though it had changed a lot, I think I could somehow remember seeing the shape of those hills from here.

"——————You finally remembered it?"

Fuyuumi smiled.

It was a very warm smile, but why was it that it somehow seemed as if she was about to cry?

"Come on, the first fireworks will go off soon. We should hurry."

Fuyuumi's wooden sandals clattered yet again as she walked off.

I followed the sound of her sandals— But I didn't need her to lead the way anymore. I knew the road. After we passed the ditch, we would turn right and walk on the rural path. After the abandoned bus station, a little further up, there were stone steps that led up to the hill. I still remembered when were we in Class Star in kindergarten. Hadn't we come here to play several times?

Here was the entrance of the shortcut to Ipponsugi[52] Hill.

And that was a place few people knew about, and a great place to enjoy fireworks ——

"How could I have forgotten?"

After thinking about it for a while, I could only find one answer:

Because I had met Chiwa.

March before the start of elementary school, I had moved next door to Chiwa's house. Since then, Chiwa's parents had driven us to the fireworks festival.

So I had completely forgotten about the little-known place to watch the fireworks from.

dodon[53]! *dodon*!

The dark air sounded like someone hit a taiko[54].

Fuyuumi and I looked at each other simultaneously and shouted:

"The fireworks!"

Already in a rush, I ran up the stairs.

I grabbed Fuyuumi’s hand, and recklessly swung my other hand.

We kicked up weeds and stones, and covered in sweat and grass stains we went to that Ipponsugi place——

"Taaamayaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"[55]!"

In front of us a huge firework burst into light.

The fireworks seemed to cover up the summer night sky, as they went up one after another. Accompanied by our pleased amazement, they bloomed like beautiful flowers.

There wasn’t anything that blocked the field of vision here, and as far as one’s eyes could see, the sky was filled with fireworks.

On this hill, one could have all the scenery to oneself.

"This place is great..."

I muttered, enchanted by the fireworks.

Fuyuumi chuckled as she heard me and said:

"Actually, *you* were the one who showed this place to me, Ta-kun."

"Ta-kun?"

This was the name that Fuyuumi had written in her notebook.

At the time I didn't know who that was, but with the memories in these hills, my thoughts flashed—

"...Ah, so it's about me?"

"Correct."

Fuyuumi had an expression that seemed to be both, crying and smiling.

"That had been your nickname in Star Class, but the only one who called you that was me."

Fuyuumi approached me and nestled up against my chest.

I could clearly feel her soft yukata and smell the scent of her fragrance.

"You're really too forgetful, Ta-kun. Can you really be number one in our grade like this?"

"Fuyuumi..."

"Even though you are now 'Ei-kun', or 'Eita-kun', or even 'Eita', long before that, it was simply 'Ta-kun'."

I looked at Fuyuumi's face who leaned against my chest, and my memories came flushing.

"Star class... Ta-kun..."

That's why. Who is that girl who's with me here right now?

Right.

It's her.

This was the 'glorious past' that my girlfriend, ex-girlfriend, and childhood friend have been mercilessly laughing about.

She was the lovely and gentle girl that I liked in kindergarten.

"...So you are... A-chan..."

Fuyuumi, no, 'A-chan' looked up from my chest and said:

"Right. I even told Kaoru to call me like that, but you didn't remember anything at all."

"He knows everything?"

"Yes. Even though I told him recently, it seemed like he wanted to stay close to Harusaki Chiwa friendship-wise, so it was kind of unfair to ask him for help he didn't want to give."

"So it was like that..."

The mystery of Kaoru’s suspicious behavior at cram school was finally solved.

"Kaoru must have been put in a difficult position."

"It's fine. After all, I’m also making graces by keeping his secret as well."

"Kaoru’s secret…?"

Even though I was a little curious, I didn’t push it further.

"I remember A-chan moved away around that summer, right? When we dug potatoes in fall and boiled taro in winter, you weren’t there."

"Yeah. After I watched fireworks here with Ta-kun, I moved away shortly after. Because it was rather sudden, we didn’t let you know until after I moved."

"When did you realize that it was me?"

"I recognized you right away, during the opening ceremony of Hane High. But it looked like Ta-kun was flirting with Harusaki Chiwa while I was completely ignored."

"N-No. It was because your hairstyle was different from when you were in Star Class."

"It’s rare for girls to keep their hairstyles from kindergarten, isn't that obvious?"

So true. Since she said that, I had nothing else to add.

"The first person to meet you had always been me. However, Harusaki Chiwa is the 'childhood friend', while I am the 'demon disciplinary committee member'. Do you understand how *difficult* this has been for me?"

"...I'm sorry..."

I finally understood the words she shouted at the cinema.

A girl who couldn't become a childhood friend no matter how much she tried— So that was what she had meant.

"As a bonus, you even became Natsukawa Masuzu's *boyfriend*, and even Akishino-san also seems to like you. How popular do you need to get before you're satisfied?! Really!"

"...No..."

I really wanted to say that she was mistaken, but I couldn't.

Even now, my memory was still quite hazy. This was something from ten years ago, so it was understandable that I couldn't remember anything, but A-chan seemed to remember everything so clearly.

A-chan pouted unhappily and said:

"Even though I confessed to you, you completely forgot."

"Sorry, honestly I don't remember things from that time very well."

"Your 'no good' habits haven't changed at all! If you acted a little more like Ta-kun, I would feel so much more reassured!"

So I had such a trashy reputation.

However, this situation was something that I had caused myself. No one else had forced it onto me.

"That year Ta-kun proudly said, 'This great person before you knows a good place to watch the fireworks!', so I asked you, 'Show me please!'. Then you said, 'If you confess to my great self, I'll show you!'.

"[...]"

Such unimaginable scum.

Using the fireworks as bait, I had forced a kindergarten girl to 'confess'.

The worst...

"Anyway, as long as you remember, that’s fine."

A-chan took out a wrinkled piece of paper from her pocket.

It seemed to be very old, and it was discolored everywhere.

When she opened it, I could see the clumsy text written with pencil.

★ Marriage Registration Form ★

Husband: Kidou Eita (Ta-kun). Stamp here:

Wife: Fuyuumi Ai (A-chan). Do the same here:

In a daze I spoke:

"What is this piece of paper?"

"As you can see, this is a marriage registration form."

"HAAAA?"

This was just too unexpected!

"It's not 'Haa'. Didn’t we agree to stamp it ten years later, so today?"

"Isn't that a lie?!"

It was a lie. I definitely wouldn’t have agreed to this. Impossible!

If I had been scumbag to this level, I definitely couldn’t be saved! I should have just gone and killed myself!

"Come on, let’s stamp it. Our fingerprints should be good enough♪."

A-chan smiled sweetly and pushed the paper against my chest.

"How can you stamp this kind of thing?!"

"Why are you so reluctant all of a sudden?"

"B-B-But you have a boyfriend, *right*? What about Michel, Daigoro?"

A-chan tilted her head slight and simply said:

"About that, that is of course nothing but a lie."

——*SAY WHAAAAAAAT*—————*?!*

"B-But didn’t you talk about him so enthusiastically?! So that was all a delusion?!"

"Fufu! I'm not trying to brag, but among all my abilities delusions *are* my specialty!"

But that really can't be called braggiiiiiiiiiing!

"Then you should have picked up a cooler sounding name from the start! What is Daigoro?! What era is that from?"

"Don’t say bad things about *my dad’s* name."

"Eh—?!"

Ehhhhhhh—?!

Then, her father’s name was…

"T-Then I guess there is no other way, we should just explain it to Masuzu and the rest clearly next time—"

"That I refuse!"

A-chan resolutely shook her head.

"Why?! There’s no reason to lie anymore."

"But it would be too embarrassing to just say, 'In reality, I don’t have a boyfriend'. Furthermore, being heralded as the Love Master feels quite good."

"WAAAH, WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS WOMAN————————?!"

"True, if Ta-kun is willing to marry me, *then* I’ll break up with Michel."

"Hey, but isn't Michel your fictional, delusional boyfriend?"

When A-chan heard this, she 'hmph'd' right away, and gave that old smile.

"Remember this clearly, Ta-kun. In this world there is no woman who isn't a liar!"

"Even if you make it sound that cool, I won't let this go!"

Plus, she actually said the same thing as Masuzu!

"Ah— Enough! I've had enough! You’re not the A-chan that I remember! You’ve changed! Your brain has been poisoned by lovestruck-ness!"

"But aren't you just the same! Your girlfriend sits on top of you! Where did the unpopular but so confident Ta-kun go?!"

Saliva flew out my mouth as I retorted:

"How would I know?! How *would I know*?! I’ll just call you Fuyuumi! I definitely won't call you A-chan anymore!"

A-chan, no, Fuyuumi’s saliva also flew as she argued:

"If that’s the case, then I’ll just call you Kidou-kun! I don’t get it, I treat you so gently, but you just get carried away!"

"When were you gentle?!"

"I *was* gentle the entire time!"

"Oh, enough, I don’t even want to stay here anymore! I’m going back to study! I'll get engaged to my reference books!"

"Wait, are you trying to run now?! Wait there, you idiot!"

I ran full throttle down the hill, and Fuyuumi caught up to me waving her paper.

"Idiot! You Idiot! I really like you! Stamp the paper!"

"NEVER! I aaaaaabsolutely won’t ever stamp it!"

Incidentally, the fireworks festival continued, and the night sky blooming with huge flowers was very beautiful.

Ah, even though I didn’t have the time to watch!

#10: Revive, Mayhem

#10 復活、そして修羅場

The morning after the fireworks festival.

Because today was the first day of school, I was going to the regular rather than the cram school.

"Ah— I really don’t want to go..."

I woke up in a bad mood because of the quarrel yesterday, and to top of it all, that cursed ringtone gave me a visit.

[Subject] Such a wonderful afternoon

[Text] To be at the fireworks festival with Fuyuumi-san. Was it fun?

"Sh-She found out about that already?"

No wait, it's Masuzu, so maybe it's just her regular way of talking.

I’ll act like I don’t know anything, then!

[Subject] Today’s Breakfast

[Text] I like half-cooked poached eggs.

The reply came instantly:

[Subject] Re: Today’s Breakfast

[Text] I like freshly crushed eggs.

[...]

Even if it feels like a joke at first glance, to reply back to me in such a curious manner...

Anyway, Perhaps Masuzu-san could actually be really *angry…?*

◆

The instant I arrived at school, Masuzu dragged me to the roof.

Even though it was only 8 o’clock, the sun was very strong—

"Well, which egg would you like me to crush first?"

"I’m sorry, Masuzu-san!"

I lowered my head to one level prior to dogeza[56] towards Masuzu. Heh? Pride? Haha! Ridiculous.

Masuzu folded her arms and sighed.

"What is the *meaning* of this? After refusing your girlfriend’s invitation, to actually secretly go to the fireworks festival with Fuyuumi Ai."

"H-How would you know?"

"You are still playing innocent? Yesterday, a student saw you two meet at school in the evening."

Damn...

But now that I think about it, even though it is summer, there are still club activities. Even though we didn’t see anyone on the fields, it wasn’t surprising that we had been seen.

Masuzu actually seemed angry. She didn’t have her usual calm and circular cynicism.

Rather, the details of her speech seemed to exude quite a dangerous atmosphere.

"Well, if you have any excuses, please go ahead."

"Ah, well."

Because there was no way I could explain it honestly—

"To be honest, I arranged a date with Fuyuumi a long time ago, from even before the club. It really was a date that we arranged a really, really long time ago, but I forgot about it. When Fuyuumi said it, I finally remembered, thus I couldn’t reject her. If I had, I would have betrayed a lot of things."

"And what are *'a lot of things'*?"

"Just a pile of 'small and shameful memories'."

I scratched my head and laughed.

"Even though it was that kind of memory, it is still my own. And even though it was a memory so embarrassing I want to die, it is *still* mine."

Regardless of the truth, I was trying to honestly express my feelings.

Otherwise, regardless of it being Fuyuumi and Masuzu, I would be lying to them both.

Masuzu shook her head immediately after she heard it:

"I don’t want to hear any excuses!"

"Heh?"

But, didn’t you just say you wanted to listen to me…?

"Don’t use words to apologize. Let your actions speak for you."

"Then, what should I do?"

"You don’t even know about *that* kind of thing?"

Masuzu stared at me with stern eyes, while she poked her right cheek.

"A Kiss."

"Ha?"

"The same amount of time you spent with Fuyuumi yesterday, kiss your girlfriend that long!"

Such a ridiculous request, she really just hated to lose.

"When you say, 'that long', I actually don’t remember."

"You really don’t get it! For this kind of thing, just an approximation will do!"

"Then it was probably around thirty minutes."

Masuzu’s eyes went wide as she heard that.

"K-Kiss *that* long? How indecent. Are you trying to get me pregnant?"

"YOU ARE THE ONE WHO TOLD ME TO DO IT!"

"...Well, then let's reduce it to three minutes, with that I'll forgive you."

So it was like that.

I faced Masuzu, and put my hand on her shoulder.

Even though Masuzu had kissed me several times, this was my first time taking the initiative...

"*funn*, why are you getting afraid by something like a kiss?"

"J-Just shut up! I can’t help it!"

"I said it before, right? For anti-love people like us, a kiss is merely a mouth to a mouth contact. Moreover, this is just a kiss on the cheek, and you’re actually so jumpy about this? There is no reason."

"Aaah, enough already!"

I angrily put my lips on Masuzu’s face.

Yes, even though it was a kiss, it gave off a feeling as if I was embracing her— I made every effort to prevent my front teeth from touching her.

Even so, Masuzu’s cheeks seemed to melt as my lips touched her smooth skin.

I had to endure an urge to faint.

——*All right, this are about three minutes.*

I removed my lips, and Masuzu’s clam expression seemed to say, 'Ara, it’s over already?'.

"With this, can you forgive me?"

I asked, my breath unsteady. Masuzu tilted her head and properly pushed her hair aside.

"Fwine, So ai’ll fworgiv yu."

"[...]"

"[...]"

That's not how we articulate, Masuzu-san.

"Nn? Nn? What? Did I just hear correctly? 'Fwine'?"

"Fine, So I’ll forgive you."

"Bu~~t that wasn't what I actually heard, is it~~? 'fwogiv yu'? Would you let me hear it once more? ~ That cute voice from just now—?"

I took the opportunity to tease her. Masuzu’s face became really red, and even her ears blushed.

Anyway, she was an ordinary girl after all. My eyes got a gentle feel to them, and—

"As expected, I can't forgive you after all!"

"Why? I did as you told me to!"

"Because I don’t like how your eyes look. I won't forgive you unless I gouge them out..."

"Don’t joke!"

Really, my girlfriend was too willful.

◆

In the afternoon.

The first day of school was over and I was about to go home.

Fuyuumi Ai was wearing the armband of the disciplinary committee as she walked into Class 1-A.

"Natsukawa Masuzu, Kidou Eita, please come to the disciplinary committee room."

Fuyuumi only quickly said these words before she rapidly turned around. I didn’t see any of her 'A-chan' expression from the day before. She was the usual demon disciplinary committee member.

Masuzu tilted her head, puzzled, and said:

"What is it?"

"I don’t know. I guess we have to go and find out."

We followed the order to come to the disciplinary committee room and saw that Chiwa and Hime were already there. However, including Fuyuumi, I didn’t see a trace of any of the disciplinary committee members.

"Chiwa, Hime, you two have also been called here?"

"It's rude to suddenly call people out!"

"But since it’s Master's order, we must obey."

At this point, Fuyuumi finally entered.

As she looked at us, she didn't have that usual stern expression.

"Sorry to keep you waiting. I went to the faculty room for a moment."

"Faculty room...?"

What was it? Does it have to do with how the club was shut down?

They couldn’t have issued a more severe punishment than shutting down the club, right? If that were the case, I could only imagine suspension and expulsion. But I didn’t think we did anything which would deserve a punishment *that* severe…

Chiwa and Masuzu seemed to have a similar train of thought, and their expressions were rather stiff.

Then Fuyuumi—

Like she did when she announced the club would be shut down, used a marker to write a few words on the whiteboard.

Those were—

'CLUB SHUTDOWN CANCELLED!

"HAAAAAAAAAA?!"

Apart from Hime, the three of us cried out loud together.

Fuyuumi faced us, and gave a 'Fufun' laugh through her nose. She smiled as she said:

"Aren't you going to thank me? This was something I proposed to the teacher."

"Proposed? Proposed what?"

"I told the teacher that my evaluation of 'The Society for Bringing Out Your Maiden Self' being harmful was actually my mistake."

"And what actually happened to let that mood of yours change like that?"

Fuyuumi stared at Masuzu wary expression, and fearlessly smiled:

"Because I'm interested, in those club activities of yours!"

"Interested?"

"When you say, 'to become popular', that also means to be 'more adept in love', right? This idea in itself is shared between all girls of marriageable age. Thus, we cannot deny this feeling, The more you suppress it, the bigger the threat of it running out of control."

"So in conclusion you want to say?"

"In other words— You need a 'Master' that can guide you on the correct path of pure love!"

"HAAAAAAA?!"

The three of us cried out loud together again.

On the other hand, only Hime nodded and said, 'Great'. Who was this girl? When did she start to worship Fuyuumi?

Then Fuyuumi’s expression suddenly turned easygoing and approachable.

"In short, due to my connections, I can supervise, coach, and participate in your club, along with the help to cancel your club shut-down. I’m proposing to you advice as someone who has a boyfriend. You're happy, right?"

"DEFINITELY NOT HAPPY AT ALL!"

Chiwa roared aloud.

"Stop joking! Why would we let you in our club?!"

Then Fuyuumi retorted, unwilling to lose:

"It’s not like I'll join your club. I'll give you *lessons*."

"Kiiiiiii——! What is this?! Who asked you for that?!"

As Chiwa quarreled with Fuyuumi, from beside them came:

"Well, because our situation is rather urgent, and there doesn't seem to be any other choice… If it can prevent our club from being shut down, then we will take in another person."

Masuzu’s pose expressed consent.

"Master’s entrance into the club has the strength of 100 people. So the day that I become popular and make Eita hug me will come closer."

Hime was just Hime. She had a very welcoming look.

Then it came to me— Because of this new fire, I clutched my head, very troubled.

"*This* again..."

I had a feeling that *this* mayhem would get worse…

Fuyuumi whispered into my ear:

"I will definitely make you stamp the 'Marriage Registration Form'. Prepare yourself!"

Cold sweat ran down from my spine.

"Weird.

Too weird!

My whole summer should have been nothing but hard studying, right...?

"Then I’ll give you guys a demonstration right now! I’ll borrow Kidou-kun to demonstrate how I usually go on dates with Michel!"

"Why does it have to be Ei-kun?! You can just bring Michel here!"

"N-No! Furthermore a dream guy like him would blind you all! Kidou-kun is better for this!"

"Is it possible that Michel can also use Dragonic Aura? If so, he's really worthy of being Master's boyfriend."

"If it's a demonstration, then I will do it as the president. Since, Eita-kun is • *my* • *boy* • *friend* • after • all!"

"Stop! Inappropriate interactions between those of the opposite sex are a violation of school rules! It is prohibited—!"

"But that runs for you as well, isn't that so?"

"It won't be inappropriate! If I g-go o-out with Kidou-kun, then we'll s-s-start by holding hands... K-Kyaaaaa—♪"

"*funn*! Hands? I've already had a taste of Eita-kun's lips so many times, that I can't even count it anymore."

"LIPS?! Why is this the first time I hear this?!"

"Hey, Natsukawa! That artificial respiration doesn't count!"

"Oh, who knows? Eita-kun put his tongue in so forcefully♪."

"Tongue?! What's up with that, Ei-kun?!"

"Incidentally, I also shared a bed with Eita before. It was my *first time*."

"I can't pretend that I didn't hear that! Ta-kun, what is with all of thiiiiiiiis?!"

Hahaha...

That's enough already, just kill me.

Kill me, kill meeeeeee!'

I’m Stuck in the Mayhem between my Girlfriend, Ex-Girlfriend, Childhood Friend, and Fiancée!

風

Afterword

Super powers, aliens, other-wordly people, and magical girls do not exist in this world.

No matter how much we「desire for this existence」, they will never be found.

However, you can「play」as them.

I am a hero with super-powers who comes from another world, and I am presently using magic powers to battle alien life forms—I can play this character.

This is the beginning of Chuunibyou

However, what's the result of「playing」?

For example, what is the difference of playing the perfect「boyfriend」, and being a real boyfriend? If「acting it isn't love」—then what is「true love」?

All the characters in this work are playing a certain role.

Boyfriend, girlfriend, childhood friend, and ex-girlfriend.

The debut of a new female lead, Fuyuumi Ai, is no exception.

She does her best to bluff and exaggerate, but what was the role does she play? What kind of impact will this in turn bring to Eita and Masuzu?

If all my readers can continue to focus on this future development, it will be my pleasure.

It is very fortunate that SQUARE ENIX scheduled three manga series to be launched.

「GANGANJOKER」is already serialized as an original comic. It is serialized on「Young GANGAN」as,「Stuck in the Mayhem Between my Girlfriend and Childhood Friend Manga」."

On「BIG GANGAN」, it is serialized as「Stuck in the Mayhem Between my Girlfriend and Childhood Friend + H」.

I am responsible for the script in +H, and in many senses it can be called H. The three works are full of the charm of the original + α, so I invite my readers to take a look at it. It would be my greatest joy.

Well, the story for this time ends here. Thank you readers for supporting me until this point.

Please turn to the next page for a preview of the fourth volume. [57]

Translator notes and references

1. ↑ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denpa
2. ↑ See http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Chuunibyou
3. ↑ If you are wondering, the original chant is Hime-chan suki suki aishiteru
4. ↑ this is like a tongue twister using the coughing sound, so the pun can't be translated in full
5. ↑ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_owarai_terms
6. ↑ I'm not sure, but I think this is a reference to the dead of Yamato no Orochi
7. ↑ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dogeza
8. ↑ the "unfriendly" of tsundere
9. ↑ She says the front half of Jienotsu, which is Masuzu's secret alternative abbreviation for their club name that means they're all "faking" and putting on an act.
10. ↑ Original idiom says something like, 'Being close to vermillion (dark red) will cause you to become red.
11. ↑ Third Year = Last year of high school in Japan
12. ↑ The reading of "Jien" as in the first part of "Jien-Otsu". It's particularly the part that means self-recreate or self-acting.
13. ↑ **Byoring**: Her usual cat-talk.
14. ↑ **Naisu Bode**: Her attempt on "Nice Body", miss-pronounced.
15. ↑ **First Class River**: Japan apparently utilizes a classification system to determine the conservation/importance status of rivers.
16. ↑ **Evil Eye**: He uses "jagan" (邪眼) naturally. A famous concept on popular culture.
17. ↑ Poco is a shy farm kid who kept running away from responsibilities. His older sister slapped some sense into him with that line before getting kidnapped by vampires and zombies.
18. ↑ Speaking childish.
19. ↑ He used a childlike tone (boku), normally he speaks in an ore-tone.
20. ↑ **Self-Performing Group**: Ai used "Jien Shuudan" (自演集団) to label their club.
21. ↑ A Masuzu laugh.
22. ↑ **You have equipped a cursed weapon**: "Nowareta Bugu wo soubi shite no toki" (呪われた武具を装備しての時). In pretty much every dragon quest you can equip cursed items, and in some of them, if you do so, the BGM changes. There

are memes associated with this.

23. ↑ ドドド: Menacing atmosphere.
24. ↑ **Over there, is there anyone?**: Jap. internet meme.
25. ↑ He was typing too fast.
26. ↑ **Vanilla Ice**: Character from JoJo Part III who can teleport through dimensional borders aka "dark space".
27. ↑ The expression used was "not being of use" (使えない), which is closer to "not being a user". In JoJo when a guy has a stand, they use a similar phrase to say "he is a (stand) user", and the same phrase to say that he isn't a user.
28. ↑ **NG**: No good.
29. ↑ **Maiden's Club**: She uses "Otome no kai" (乙女の会).
30. ↑ **Inter-High**: The "inter-high" is a big competition between several schools, there is almost technically one inter-high for every sport club and it usually is the club goal to qualify and perform great in it.
31. ↑ It's a Japanese custom to send summer greeting cards.
32. ↑ She is mixing up a famous line which is by the Shinsegumi representing their 'policy', the famous "Aku Soku Zan" or "Slay evil swiftly" (悪・即・斬). Her own version is "Shiri Soku Yoku" or "Swift desire (for) butts" (尻・即・欲).
33. ↑ He is playing with words here. Basically, he says that one's self confidence (自分 に 自信) means that one believes in oneself (自分 を 信じ), and thus the "信じ" that Masuzu doubted is there.
34. ↑ Taro is a root, but its name in Japanese can be roughly translated to be mean “village potato”.
35. ↑ I’ve never seen this in the United States, but I’m guessing there’s this bell you press to call the waiter.
36. ↑ Reflect is a two-character word in Chinese, so I tried to better express reflect on one’s actions as “self-reflect” to match the wordplay.
37. ↑ The Chinese isn’t really clear if it’s A-chan or not, so someone probably needs to check the original Japanese.
38. ↑ The nyaa is cat sfx, mee is sheep sfx.
39. ↑ Original text is奥义. I had no clue what it is, and it doesn’t come up in my dictionary. D:
40. ↑ **Meat Doll**: Has a really nasty ring to it; also used in JoJo by Dio.
41. ↑ Wordplay, instead of the original "メロメロ" (to be in love), he uses "ボコボコ (beating up).
42. ↑ **Paramecium**: Single cell organism.[1]
43. ↑ **Kote**: In Kendo, you are supposed to yell where you hit. Kote means "glove" aka "hand".
44. ↑ It has been mentioned that there is an "Ai-chan" that submits suggestions to

Pachi Lemon.

45. ↑ **Epic Fail**: Reference to Fuyuumi's, 'Epic win'.
46. ↑ In Englich.
47. ↑ In English.
48. ↑ In English.
49. ↑ In English.
50. ↑ "Unchi" is "shit" in Japanese. "Shitto", on the other hand, means "jealousy", which would make the poem sound less strange.
51. ↑ **Geta**: Wooden foot wear.[2]
52. ↑ Literally, a cedar tree.
53. ↑ Fireworks sound effect.
54. ↑ **Taiko**: A drum used on festivals.
55. ↑ **Tamaya**: "Tamaya" and "Kagiya" are phrases specifically said to celebrate watching fireworks. Those two phrases are actually the name of old fireworks makers that helped to make fireworks popular in Japan.
56. ↑ **Dogeza**: "Dogeza" is a way of apologizing, which involves "prostrating" oneself towards someone. Engaging in dogeza immediately tells clearly the difference of status between the one who is kneeling down and the one being "apologized" to, thus it is pretty common for "tough" characters never to go into that stance as to keep their bad-ass pride intact.
57. ↑ Translation is too lazy to translate the preview. Keehee.

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